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MEMOIR  
OF THE  
REV. W. GRIFFITHS  
BURY GREEN.  

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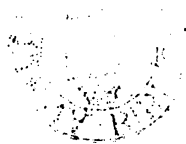
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yours very sincerely

William Griffiths

A MEMOIR  
OF THE  
Life and Labours  
OF THE  
REV. WM. GRIFFITHS,  
BURY GREEN, GOWER.

BY THE  
REV. W. WILLIAMS, SWANSEA.

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ERRATA.—Page 94, line 23, for "church" read "chapel"  
" " " line 26, for "chapel" read "church."

# MEMOIR.

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## CHAPTER I.

Birth and parentage—home training—early impressions—  
the boy preacher—a sermon in a barn—leaving home  
—death of parents.

ALTHOUGH the Rev. WILLIAM GRIFFITHS spent the greater part of his life in an English-speaking district, and preached and laboured chiefly in the English language, he was brought up in a neighbourhood which was at that time, and continues to the present day, entirely Welsh. In the north part of the County of Pembroke, and nearly bordering upon Cardiganshire, lies the parish of Clyday; and in that parish there is a small farmhouse, known by the name of Blaenbrwynen. It was there, on the 21st of December, 1788, that the honoured subject of the present memoir was born. His parents, Thomas and Mary Griffiths, belonged to the small farmers class; but were respected above most people in their own sphere of life, on account of their superior religious intelligence and piety. In the absence of worldly wealth and worldly influence, "the wisdom which is from above" brings present honour to those who possess it. Though the wealth of this world is generally and eagerly sought, and sought chiefly

for the sake of the deference which is paid to earthly riches, though it is true that "money is power," and that the man who has it is "looked up to" by those who have it not, yet it is a well known fact that the weightiest influence in the world is that of character. Such, it appears, was the influence of Thomas and Mary Griffiths. They were remarkable for the extent of their acquaintance with their Master's Word, and for the promptitude of their obedience to his commandments; hence they were looked upon by the people of the neighbourhood as "leaders and instructors."

This pious pair bestowed great pains upon the training of their children. Family worship was never on any account neglected; family instruction was faithfully and perseveringly imparted chiefly by the mother. She instructed her children in the leading facts and doctrines of the Bible; impressed upon their minds the evil of sinful practices; talked to them often of death and the day of judgment, and frequently questioned them on what they had learnt, while the whole was enforced by strict but affectionate parental discipline, unswerving integrity, and holiness of life. It was in fact "a church in the house;" and it is by no means marvellous that from such a family as this there should arise two such brothers as the Rev. Samuel Griffiths, of Horeb, and the Rev. William Griffiths, of Burry Green.

As could be expected under the circumstances, Mr. Griffiths, in his earliest childhood, felt deep religious impressions. Between his 9th and 14th years especially he was haunted by fears of death and judgment; and though in after years he felt that he did not at this time refrain from sin because of its sinfulness, nor possess any sanctifying and saving knowledge of the truth, he had reason to bless God for that parental training which had been the means of restraining him from running to the same excesses as others at that critical period, when those habits are formed which leave their impressions on the character of the man during the whole period of his life.

In his childhood he was bashful and timid, much afraid of strangers, and distressed by the presence of all except the members of his own family and next door neighbours. On this account there was considerable difficulty in getting him to attend school. For some time his mother would follow him until she saw him enter the schoolroom. But after a while the master and schoolboys became "acquaintances;" all the terror was removed from that circle, and he began to like school and to make some progress in learning. It was, however, of short duration. Providence removed the family from that neighbourhood, and other circumstances combined to bring his school education to an abrupt and early conclusion.

Though not intended for the ministry by his pious parents, the ministerial instinct began to develop itself early in the timid and bashful boy. His fondness for books and his maternal catechizing gave him scriptural knowledge far beyond the generality of lads of his age; and it does not appear that he was backward in displaying his acquirements among his boyish friends, so that he and his brother came to be known by their playmates as "the preachers." To play "meeting" was one of their favourite pastimes; and on those occasions either he or his brother Samuel was invariably the "officiating minister." It was not with him, however, altogether play. On the contrary, when he stood up to address his companions, he "felt quite serious." On one occasion an exhibition of this kind on his part turned out more "serious" than he had anticipated. The farm servants in the barn had persuaded him to preach them a sermon, not so much, it is to be feared, for their edification as for their amusement. The day of judgment seems at this time to have been uppermost in his thoughts. His mother often spoke to him of death and judgment. Often was he haunted with fears of that great day. He had a remarkable dream of the end of all things, when he saw the world burning, and the field on which he stood burning on both sides, and eventually cleaving in two just under his feet. Some one, however, helped him out of the open-

ing gulf before he went down; and he saw the Judge standing in the clouds just above his head, casting upon him a kind and compassionate look. And now that he was called to preach a sermon to the farm servants in the barn, he selected for his subject the end of the world and the day of judgment. He had proceeded for some time peacefully and satisfactorily with his discourse, and was shouting at the top of his voice, "The world will burn with fire, and all things shall melt into water, the people and all the cattle of this place shall perish"—when, lo! the sermon was brought to an abrupt termination by the unexpected and unwelcome entrance of his father. However pleasing his effort may have been to his audience, it was most revolting to the feelings of his pious parent that he should thus profanely dare to trifle with sacred things; and severe reproof was the reward which he obtained for his barn ministrations.

During the days of his boyhood and early youth, he was religious after a certain fashion. He attended the public means of grace, and frequently enjoyed them. He read the Bible, principally the historical portions. He was constant in the exercise of private prayer. Now he felt deep religious impressions, and now he lost them. His case need not be described to those who have passed through the same process; it is the old old story which is well known to



every one whose early training and religious impressions, after years of conflict with the world without and corruption within, have at length resulted in his saving conversion. When, after arriving at mature age, he took a retrospect of this period of his life, he wrote:—

“I had a kind of reverence for God, and for everything religious, all the time I lived under my father’s roof; but it was more the effect of parental training than of any spiritual knowledge of the character of God, or of the evil of sin. It was light in my head, and not love in my heart. This shows the necessity of regeneration to produce a right state of feeling towards God, whatever our age or our privileges may happen to be. We must be born again, or we continually mistake the nature and purposes of true piety. I know, from the recollections I still have of my childhood and youth, how easily men may be deceived themselves, and deceive others in this matter; thinking that religion consists in outward habits and exercises, arising more from the imitation of others than from any sense of Divine obligation—a *ritual* service of God taking the place of faith and love. Few men have had better opportunities to learn what true religion is than I had when with my parents; yet, when I come to review and examine that knowledge, behold it was nothing, *nothing at all* to the purpose. I was proud enough to think that I was

better than others of my age and station; and this pride was fostered by the praises of others older than myself, who I remember used to admire the 'boy,' and frequently to ask one another, 'What manner of child shall this be?' When I look back over this period, I feel indeed thankful to God for the great privilege of having been born of pious parents, and trained early in the ways of salvation; but in respect to myself, I see nothing but cause of shame and regret that all this time I was a stranger to every spiritual truth."

When he was about 14 years of age, circumstances transpired which made it necessary that he should leave his father's house, and seek employment as a servant on one of the neighbouring farms. Happily for him he found a place in a religious family. Here he enjoyed the same privileges as at home; and during his residence in this household, his religious impressions do not seem to have lost their influence over his mind or his outward conduct. But at the close of the twelve months he was removed to quite a different sphere. His new master was himself a religious man; but all the rest of the large household, and the servants especially, were, to use his own words, "vain and worldly characters." Daily intercourse with these sons of Belial to a great extent counteracted his religious impressions, while his timid and bashful nature could not

withstand their "scoffs and merry jests at serious religion;" and he was unable to restrain himself from joining them in the levities which gave him bitter pangs of conscience when alone, though he thankfully records that neither the influence of their example nor their direct temptation succeeded in leading him into paths of positive immorality.

But he was now in slippery places; religion and religious means were growing distasteful to him; the habit of private prayer was discontinued; and though he did not run to the same excess of riot as others, he would have liked to do so if he only dared. There was a growing taste for the pleasures of sin, and it was only the restraints of fear that prevented them from being gratified. Many are the youths who have for a time felt these restraints, but who have at length broken through them, and have taken revenge on their past fears by the enormity of their excesses. Water runs with all the more impetuosity when once it has forced down the embankment that for a while held it back. He that was possessed with the legion of unclean spirits, was often bound with fetters and chains; but the chains were plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces, and then his cries on the mountains and among the tombs were more fearful, and the injuries he inflicted upon himself more serious than if he had never been bound at

all. When there is nothing to oppose a sinful inclination but mere dread of the consequences of sin, the victory will at length be won by the evil; and in many instances the destruction of every good habit and feeling will be the more complete, and the indulgence in sinful habits the more determined, in proportion to the violence of the struggle by which the victory has been achieved.

Had William Griffiths at this time enjoyed unbroken prosperity, we know not how far his iniquities would have prevailed. His mind was sobered again and again by a succession of painful dispensations. Both his excellent parents were removed to their rest within ten months of each other, when he was in his sixteenth year; and just as the impressions produced by these painful visitations were beginning to pass away, his serious thoughts of death and judgment again disappearing, and his habit of private prayer again discontinued, he was himself attacked with a dangerous fever, then prevalent in the neighbourhood, and which proved fatal to great numbers. By this he was brought to the verge of the grave. For some time his life was despaired of; and as his health and strength were slowly returning, he resolved to serve that God who had so mercifully spared him. "I promised in myself," he writes, "to mend my ways, and to lead a godly life; but it was all in my own

strength, arising, as I afterwards understood, from a legal spirit." Thus we find him, at the age of eighteen, retaining some of the outward forms of religion, attending religious means, keeping "scrap books," in which he wrote "verses of hymns that he heard in public worship which were to his taste," and yet a stranger to the power of religion in his soul; a young man of uncorrupted morals, but a young man with an unrenewed heart. By the mercy of God, the conflict that was then raging in his mind did not come to the disastrous termination that we have above attempted to describe. Though he was kept from outward sins only by the restraints of conscience, and although those restraints were becoming weaker and weaker as the evil disposition within him was increasing in strength, and the temptations around him were increasing in number and violence, they were kept unbroken until his heart was changed—until faith and love subdued the evils which fear had but feebly opposed, and made his future life an example, and himself a trophy of the triumphs of Divine grace.

## CHAPTER II.

Drafted into the militia—march to Devonport—fools and their money—strange coaching—Bristol—three months at Milford—a brother's visit—a Sabbath at home—an affecting farewell—return to Bristol—increasing seriousness—decision—an unpleasant billet—march to Newcastle—a Sabbath at Durham—discharge—return home.

IN the year 1807, before Mr. Griffiths was fully nineteen years of age, an event took place which proved the crisis of his life, and of which he afterwards wrote: "Though it was very painful to me at the time, it was overruled by Providence for my future benefit, and opened step by step the way by which the Lord brought me into his house, and employed me in his vineyard to this day."

Those were days of war and commotion, of fear and forebodings. Napoleon Bonaparte was then at the zenith of his power, and pursuing his victorious career on the continent of Europe. The victories of Austerlitz, Jena, Eylau, and Friedland, had broken the strength of the great continental powers, and had compelled them to accept peace on the conqueror's own terms. England seemed then to be the only obstacle in his way to universal dominion, and he had just commenced his grand system of measures for excluding her from the trade of the continent, by declaring the British Isles in a state of blockade, and prohibiting all intercourse with them;

while England had hurled defiance in his face by declaring every port from which she was excluded in a state of blockade, and all vessels trading with it liable to capture. He had made great preparations with a view to invade this country; and though the French fleet had been annihilated at Trafalgar, all danger of invasion had not yet passed away. Thirteen years before this time a French force had actually landed on the coast of Pembrokeshire; and though it was so insignificant as to be obliged to surrender without a struggle, the terrible sensation which it had created throughout the whole of that district had not yet fully subsided. The remembrance of that attempt, combined with the disastrous tidings which continued to arrive from the continent, kept the minds of the people in a state of constant alarm, and there was nothing more common than to hear that "the French were coming." The militia regiments of all the counties were then in constant service; and the period of service for each man was five years. To fill up vacancies occasioned by the expiration of that term, as well as by enlistments into the regular army, recourse was had to renewed drafting; and on one of these occasions our friend was drafted into the Carmarthenshire Militia. The necessities of the country's defence having considerably enhanced the value of labour, and the fear of a French invasion rendering a conflict with the enemy in

our own country probable, the price of substitutes stood at a very high figure. Some were obliged to pay £50, others as much as £60, for men to serve in their stead. Such a sum was far above the reach of William Griffiths, or any of his friends; and he was, therefore, obliged in the depth of winter, and with a heavy heart, to leave his home in company with three hundred other recruits, to join the regiment, then stationed at Devonport.

Among these there were several substitutes, who were, for that reason, abounding in money, but who had little idea of its value or power. They had heard of such a sum as fifty pounds, but had never seen it in their lives before; and now that they had it in their own actual possession, they thought themselves enormously rich. They had no conception of all that it would do for them, but they felt certainly persuaded of one thing—that it was inexhaustible. The idea of being able to come to the end of such a vast sum as fifty pounds was too preposterous to entertain for a moment. No, they could spend as much as they pleased without the least danger of spending the whole. As soon as they reached their destination, and joined their comrades, these men presented an apt illustration of the well known adage—"the fool and his money are soon parted." We have heard Mr. Griffiths giving some amusing examples of the means which they employed to get,



if possible, at the bottom of the immense treasure. Among other things, they would hire a coach, mount on its top, and ask the coachman to take them wherever he pleased, only he must drive in full gallop, and give them a ten shilling run. That "run" of course would soon come to an end; but they must have another, and then another. It mattered little or nothing that they were taken over the same ground again and again, for they were now actually on a coach, a thing which they had rarely seen in their lives, and never seen occupied but by gentlemen. If some of their old neighbours were but to see them now, what *would* they say? Besides all this, the "old hands," like vultures, scented their prey, and paid great respect to the "monied men" for the sake of hot suppers and general good cheer. Between all, they were not many weeks before they discovered that their mine of wealth was a thing that could be exhausted, and simultaneously with this they made another discovery; namely, that all flatterers are not friends. Of course nothing in the shape of treats was expected from the balloted men. They were poor, and therefore, although they had for the time less respect, they received more kindness. Our friend had no disposition to drink himself, nor had he the means wherewith to treat others. He was not, therefore, expected to join them in their bouts of revelry. His poverty was to him

a preservative from temptation; and to this in after time he thankfully ascribed his having passed in safety through scenes which were the ruin both temporally and morally of not a few of his comrades.

Military life did not turn out as unpleasant to him as he had feared. His cheerful disposition and fund of amusing anecdotes made him a favourite in the regiment; but he was falling fast into a state of indifference to the interests of his soul. Barrack work on the Sabbath, which at first seemed strange to him, and made him feel very unhappy, had become less distasteful; and he began to regard it as one of the necessities of his situation, and therefore no sin at all. After spending four months at Devonport, they were marched to Bristol. It was then the custom to send detachments from the force stationed at the latter place to do duty in rotation for three months at Milford; and it came to his lot, after spending some four months at Bristol, to be sent down in one of these detachments. He was thus brought to spend a short time in his native county, and within reach of his friends. "I was then," he writes, "beginning to settle down in hardness of heart, accommodating myself, as I thought, to a soldier's life, and resolved not to think of religion until my five years' service had expired." While he was at Milford, his brother Samuel, who in the mean time had become a

decided character, paid him a visit, stayed with him one night, spoke to him much of the dangers of his situation, crowded as he was into a barrack-room with a host of ungodly companions, far from religious friends, and deprived of the benefits of religious conversation and the means of grace. He expressed the hope that the Lord would preserve him, and declared that for himself he did not think that he could ever live in such a place. He related the manner in which the Lord had been pleased to visit their native home with a mighty revival of religion, and named several of the companions of their childhood who had since his departure become the disciples of Christ. This conversation made a deep impression on his mind.

When the period of service at Milford had expired, and the detachment had reached Narberth on its march back towards Bristol, he obtained leave of absence for two days to visit his friends. The news of his arrival soon spread through the neighbourhood, and a large number of his old friends and companions came together to see him. He had no opportunity however to relate to them any of the scenes and adventures of his soldier life, so eager were they to tell him what great wonders of grace God had wrought and was still working among them. They manifested great concern for his spiritual welfare, and sincerely lamented his "hard lot." Next morn-

ing he must leave to rejoin his company at Carmarthen. Being the Sabbath, his brother had engagements which he could not relinquish, and therefore was unable to accompany him any part of his way; but this duty was performed by his eldest sister, a decidedly pious young woman, who lived for many years adorning her Christian profession. "She came with me," he writes, "about twenty miles, until we came within sight of Carmarthen, and talked to me all the way about good things, and about our dear parents then in heaven. We parted in deep distress, not knowing that we should see each other ever again. She wept bitterly as she was turning back the head of her horse, and taking the one on which I rode from me. I refrained from manifesting any feeling until I had gone out of her sight, *then I wept much*. All my former life, my convictions, short reformations, and my relapses to my former careless state came fresh before my mind. I well remember saying to myself, The prayers of our godly parents are answered in the conversion of the other children; but as for me, I am lost. I am like a *black bird*, that must perish. My convictions were vivid, but I had no hope. My former knowledge of scripture truths seemed to have deserted me; and in this state of mind I reached the town. I sincerely trust to this day that this was the beginning of the good work in my soul, though

for several months afterwards I struggled hard against it." As they were marching on towards Bristol, his unusual pensiveness attracted the attention of his comrades, and drew from some of them the remark that "he must have mixed with the Methodists on the Sunday." This was too much for him. He would be cheerful. His companions must not be allowed to think that he was religious. Religion was all very well, and he would much like to possess it; but to be thought religious by these young men was more than he could bear. He would laugh and joke as usual, he would do anything rather than that people should be led to think that he was tainted with Methodism. But it would not do. There was a sting in his conscience all the while, for the arrow of conviction had now penetrated his heart.

Some months of severe conflict followed. "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace." He will not surrender possession until a stronger than he shall come upon him, and not even then without a determined struggle. The wrath of the devil when he has descended among men is so much the greater "because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." The extraordinary instances of demoniacal possession which occurred when our Saviour was on earth, are ascribed by many to the fact that the evil one had some forebodings

that the conflict in which he was to be so signally defeated was at the door. When summoned to leave those of whom he had taken possession, he would not do so without first throwing them on the ground and tearing them. The subject of our memoir experienced strange commotions as the dominion of Satan over him was drawing to a close. Now he would go to the Welsh chapel in Broadmead, and that which he heard there was as a two-edged sword to his heart and conscience; and now he would fight with those convictions, determined, if possible, to put them down. "I strove hard," says he, "for some time between sinning and repenting, between sinful company and no company at all. Once or twice I tried the society of drunkards, following them to the ale-house, in the hope of finding peace; but there I felt truly miserable, and my conscience on fire." In the heat of the battle he was driven to commit sins of which he had never in his life been guilty before. That his companions might not suspect that he entertained any serious thoughts of religion, he would venture some times to curse and swear. On one occasion, when standing with forty or fifty others on College Green, he confirmed some statement with an oath. One of the bystanders, a notorious swearer himself, pointed to him with his finger, and said with a loud laugh, "Did you hear *him* swear?" The enemy had overacted his part.

This seeming victory and this shout of triumph sealed his defeat. That was the last profane oath that William Griffiths ever uttered. "His remark," he says, "went as a dagger to my heart, and by the mercy of God it proved to me a blessing. I finished with their company that very day, and was never afterwards guilty of such wicked attempts. My convictions now increased in strength, and I began to see sin in a new light, and to feel that my heart was full of iniquity. I kept much to myself, attended the means of grace regularly at the Welsh chapel, and again commenced the habit of private prayer; but I was ashamed for a time to go on my knees in the presence of my ungodly partner, for I was unwilling that he should think that I felt any concern for my soul; nor did I wish that he should know where I was going so frequently on the week evenings when I stole away to chapel. There was in the regiment a little band of truly religious men, but I had stood aloof from them until about this time. I had now the privilege of becoming acquainted with one of these, and soon afterwards with another. A very strong attachment grew between us. Each loved the others as he did his own soul. Not belonging to the same company, we could not be together as often as we wished; but whenever we could meet, all our talk was about the word of God, and our religious feelings. These with a few more

of their companions, occasionally met in the chapel on week evenings to read the scriptures. They invited me to join them, which invitation I gladly accepted; and from my having had more privileges than they in former years, I was able to be their teacher, so far as reading went, while they were my instructors in heart knowledge. They often told me that they thought it my duty to join the church at Broadmead, now while the regiment continued at Bristol, as we did not know how soon we might be removed to some other place. I had a strong desire to do so, but felt that I was too vile, and was afraid to venture on such a serious step. I hesitated thus for about six months, when I was taken to the hospital in a burning fever, which threatened my life. The religious brethren visited me frequently, and I was happy to see them. I said to myself, 'These godly men consider me as one of their own number, but alas, I am not.' When restored to health, I again hesitated on the subject of joining the church; fear contended with inclination, and for a time it was fear that prevailed. My friend David Davies, my first religious acquaintance in the regiment, and myself, often sought each other out. We spent many hours walking together in the dead of night, when out on guard at the French prison, hardly believing that the time passed away so rapidly when called upon to take our turn as sentinels. As soon as that two



hours' service was over, we would again meet and resume our former conversation without feeling any weariness. These were delightful seasons; and the remembrance of them is sweet to my memory at this distance of time. At one of these guard-meetings I well remember that, while I was alone in my sentry-box, the following text came to my mind with great power: 'Who-soever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.' I was hesitating about joining the church, and that scripture at once determined me. I felt that there was no place left for neutrals—that all those who did not own Christ by public profession before the world were ashamed of him, and therefore virtually denied him. I told my friend that very day that I was resolved to come just as I was, and offer myself to the church. I did as I had resolved, and was received by the unanimous vote of the brethren. Soon afterwards I felt great peace in my soul; my heart was always drawn towards the chapel, and all religious ordinances were exceedingly precious to me. I loved the gates of Zion above my chief joy, and the work of the Lord then became my greatest delight. I was enabled by the grace of God to take a decided course, and fully to separate myself from the world; and soon

found to my comfort that firm decision of character is the best preservative against the scoffs and ridicule of the ungodly. Though they do not love the way of truth and holiness, their own consciences compel them to respect those whose conduct is consistent with the profession they make."

Soon after he had taken this decisive step, he met a new and unexpected temptation. The regiment was removed to another part of the city, and as a necessary consequence, he was obliged to change his quarters. He availed himself of this opportunity to choose for his partner and messmate a young man who, like himself, had recently joined the church. Their being billeted in public houses was most disagreeable to those who were seriously disposed; but all these places were not alike, and Mr. G. made an application to the sergeant of his company, who had the billeting arrangements at his own disposal, requesting him to have the kindness to place him and his partner in some quiet and well conducted house. But this man was an enemy to religion, and in his small way a persecutor; and he used his little authority to place the two friends in one of the worst and lowest houses on his list—a common resort of loose characters and dissolute women. Here their quarters were assigned to them in a garret on the top of the house. Thrown thus against their will among the worst

of the wicked, they resolved to make a decided stand for that religion which they loved. At once they demanded the key of their room, stating that no one belonging to the house should be allowed, on any account, to enter it, and stipulating to do all that was necessary to be done in it themselves. In consequence of there being no fireplace, they were obliged to do their cooking in the kitchen, which would often be full of people in all those different states of mind and body in which drinkers are generally found, and who, of course, did not always treat them with the greatest civility. Their room was a double-bedded one, and on the second day they were joined in it by two other soldiers, whom the petty persecutor had sent there, probably because they were like-minded with themselves. It was decided that they should hold family worship together, morning and evening, in their room, and that each in his turn should engage in the service. These garret prayers very soon attracted the attention of the other inmates of the house. It was a strange thing in this den of infamy to hear anyone pray, and was certainly more disagreeable to those who lived in it, and to those who frequented it, than the prayers and praises of Paul and Silas were to their fellow prisoners at Philippi. Though they understood not the sense, they hated the sound, for it jarred upon their guilty consciences. The landlord

remonstrated, declaring that he would not allow prayers in his house, particularly as some lodgers in the room below had complained that they were disturbed by them. Our friend was often too timid and bashful to stand for his own rights, and frequently suffered inconvenience and loss rather than remonstrate; but when duty or principle was concerned, he was firm as a rock and bold as a lion. He at once told the complaining landlord that they would on no account discontinue their prayers; that they were the king's servants; that they had been appointed a room in his house according to the law; that that room was their own as long as they were there, as much as the other parts of the house were his; that they had therefore a right to use it as they thought proper themselves; that worshipping God was a duty which they felt bound to perform, and that since their prayers were not louder than the other people's talk, no one had a right to complain. Thus ended the remonstrance at that time; but some days afterwards, the landlord meeting him, said, "You have not dropped your prayers upstairs." The answer he received was, "No, and I hope we never shall." The last day will reveal whether some of the seed which fell in this arid soil has not borne fruit to everlasting life; but it is certain that the influence of these poor soldiers who prayed in the garret was to some extent felt in

the house. "The fear of us," Mr. Griffiths writes, "was to some degree visible on the inmates, though we had very little intercourse with them. I once overheard a conversation, of which our praying upstairs was the topic, between two dissolute females in the kitchen. They condemned their own mode of life, and justified us as doing that which was proper and good."

In July, 1809, they were removed from Bristol to Sunderland. This was to our friend a great trial, and he felt it more keenly than he had his first departure from home. He was daily forming new friendships among the Welsh brotherhood at Bristol, and to leave these was far more painful to him than it had been nineteen months before to leave the home of his childhood and the companions of his youth. The night before they left was a great night at Broadmead Chapel, something similar to that which preceded the departure of Paul from Troas. "We were so attached," says he, "to the friends at Broadmead, that we spent the whole of the last night with them in chapel; and the time so rapidly passed, that the hour for our departure arrived before we were aware of it. Many of the brethren accompanied us some miles out of the city, walking in the crowd among the regiment, and then returned."

The "religious band" in the regiment had

increased in number during their stay at Bristol; and these young men were none of those half-hearted religionists, whom a worldly engagement which they could put off to another time, or a call from a friend, or even a pleasure excursion will keep away from the means of grace. With them religion was the principal thing, and the means of religion the delight of their souls. During their long march of three hundred and five miles, from Bristol to Sunderland, and which occupied twenty-three days, they frequently met together to pray in the towns through which they passed. Staying but one night at the same place, and scattered as they were among different companies, this was often attended with considerable difficulty; "but where there is a will there is a way;" the difficulties were surmounted, and the much coveted meetings were held. When they reached their destination, their first care was to secure some place to hold their meetings for prayer and private religious intercourse. In this they were successful. A Rev. Mr. Turner, Independent minister, was kind enough to allow them to meet in his chapel, near the barracks, which they made their religious home as long as they remained in that town. Removed from thence to Newcastle-on-Tyne, they found there "a religious home" and religious friends; and called away suddenly on the Sabbath day to Durham, to quell a riot among the colliers, our

friend, after the bustle of the day, found himself in the evening listening to a sermon by the Rev. Lewis Jones, from Rev. iii. 12: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from God, and I will write upon him my new name;" and he retained sweet recollections to the day of his death of that happy service, the conversation that followed at the house of the minister, and the little Welsh prayer meeting held the following week at his vestry, and which the minister himself attended. The said Rev. Lewis Jones was a native of Pembrokeshire, and distantly related to Mr. Griffiths' father. He had begun his ministry among the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, and had studied at the Countess of Huntingdon's College at Trevecca; but had taken the pastorate of an Independent church in the city of Durham, where he lived and laboured for many years. He was delighted to meet his young countrymen, and was a great help to them while they continued in these parts; visiting them several times at Sunderland and Newcastle; preaching to them both in Welsh and English, and conducting their meetings for religious experience.

So strong was the attachment formed between

Mr. Griffiths and some religious friends in these parts, that he felt inclined to settle there after the expiration of the term of his service, provided he could find any means of obtaining a livelihood; but it was otherwise ordained by the providence of God.

In October, 1812, they were removed to Manchester. There the little regimental church joined themselves to a congregation of Welsh Calvinistic Methodists; and there, after two months, the five years' service of our friend came to a close, and he obtained his discharge.

While at Manchester he became acquainted with the Rev. Rees Jones, then of Anglesea, but afterwards of Penclawdd, in Glamorganshire. This acquaintance ripened into a warm and lasting friendship, and was the means, as we shall see by and by, of bringing Mr. Griffiths to Gower, where the two friends lived and laboured together in harmony and love, until the former was removed from his work to his rest, in the month of February, 1829.

The last week of his stay at Manchester he first saw and heard that great and good man, the Rev. John Elias, who showed him no little kindness; gave him a paper of introduction to religious friends by whom he had to pass on his way home, stating who and what he was, and requesting them to receive him kindly, and entertain him as a brother in the Lord. Mr.



Elias being on his journey to the Association at Bala, they travelled part of the way in company; and much to the young brother's distress, he was several times obliged to enter the pulpit in his red coat, and introduce the services for the great man, in the presence of crowded congregations. He was afraid in after years that he had got through those services rather awkwardly, and that in his zeal he had exposed a great amount of ignorance in the presence of people who knew much more than himself; but he was comforted by the consciousness that his heart was sincere, and that he had done his best. Thus, after spending five years amid scenes and companions which have proved the ruin of many souls, he reached the home of his childhood a much better and wiser man than when he had left it.

When many years afterwards he was taking a retrospect of his soldier life, he penned the following sentences:—"I was enabled by the grace of God that helped me to lead a strictly religious life, though constantly surrounded by many temptations, and by a host of ungodly men. By being firm and decided, I found less difficulty than I had anticipated to stand my ground. Religion is of unspeakable value even as a preservative against present evils. I had quite a taste for spiritual society, and felt a constant pleasure in attending the house of God. By the

good hand of the Lord upon me, I never felt indifferent about attending religious ordinances, nor did I ever find them a weariness. These, as means, were my tower of safety in those days, for in them the Lord often refreshed and blessed my soul; and in being enabled to walk consistently, I found that I had much greater influence among my ungodly comrades than otherwise I could have expected to possess." God hath said, "Those who honour me will I honour."

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## CHAPTER III.

School keeping—night-schools—first sermon—distressed for a text—the list of members—care for the cause—Satan's tactics—self examination—religious talk—the great men of that day—Association at Llangeitho—another at Fishguard—frightful dream—examined and passed—appointment to Gower.

WHEN he returned home he found his brother, Mr. Samuel Griffiths, married, living at a place called Ffosfantach, in their native parish, and engaged in teaching a day school on his own account at a place distant about two miles from his residence. We have already stated that our friend's early advantages to acquire knowledge had been few; but during his sojourn in England he had not been idle. He had of necessity gained some knowledge of the English language, and he had availed himself of the leisure afforded by a soldier's life to store his mind. His brother, desirous that he should find work congenial to his mind, and finding employment himself in another sphere, at once gave up the school to his charge. In teaching others he was himself taught; and being disengaged in the evenings, he was able frequently to attend the religious services he so much loved. But he was not satisfied with acquiring good himself, for his heart, at this early period of his religious life, was burning with a desire to do good to others. Evening schools were opened in different local-

ities within his reach, into which young people were brought together to be instructed in scriptural knowledge. These schools were removed from house to house as they were required; two or three being generally held every week. Great was the pleasure which he derived from these exercises; and it was here that he began "to speak in public." "These schools," he writes, "were my principal delight, and often while addressing them I found my heart full of matter." He was not as yet a preacher; but those who wish to work will not fail to find something to do for their Lord. Immediately after his return to his native country, we find in him the persevering and indefatigable industry that characterized the whole of his ministerial life. It was a busy, painstaking young man like him that we would expect to ripen in process of time into the "apostle of Gower."

A report had reached his home before him that he had been in the habit of preaching while with the regiment, and the brethren therefore requested him to preach the first Sabbath after his arrival; but when he undeceived them on the subject, they urged him no more. But there was an urging in his own bosom. Though he felt just then unprepared to comply with the request of the brethren, there were feelings in the depths of his soul which made it evident that by and by preach he must. He passed

through a year of conflict. The "desire to speak publicly" to his fellow-sinners burned in his heart, still he forbore, fearing that the Lord had not sent him; but all the time he could have said with Jeremiah, "His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." He sought light and guidance in secret prayer; and the more he prayed, the more he wanted to preach. One or two of the elders of the church to which he belonged would often speak to him on the subject; and at last he disclosed to them his own feelings. This brought matters to a crisis; and on a Sabbath in June, 1814, the congregation having been disappointed in the minister who was expected to supply, at the earnest solicitation of the brethren, "I ventured," he writes, "with much trembling after prayer to stand up and speak. I was too nervous to enjoy liberty." His next attempt was a few Sabbaths afterwards at a farmhouse where one of his evening schools was held. Here he ventured to read a text. It was Hosea v. 15: "I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early." And this time he "enjoyed liberty and much comfort."

He had now fairly entered upon the great work of his life; and during the remaining two years of his residence in this neighbourhood he laboured

incessantly; teaching in his own English school by day, attending the Welsh schools in the evenings in four different localities, at a distance of five or six miles from his home, and preaching on the Sabbaths and on week evenings wherever he was invited. But his zeal was too much for his strength. Walking long distances late at night and early in the morning, together with the mental and bodily exertion required by his frequent ministrations, told disastrously on his feeble constitution, and brought on a violent fever and ague, which laid him so low that for about three weeks his life was despaired of. In this state he continued to preach to those who came to see him; and from the fulness of his heart he addressed such strong expressions to some of his careless visitors as greatly offended them. He thought that he was about to die, and felt desirous that his last words should be the means of plucking some brands out of the burning.

In his diary under date July 24th, 1815, we have the following entry:—"On Saturday evening, the first of this month, I was attacked by a fever which increased to such a degree, that I was for about three weeks unable to leave my bed; and now when I write I am so excessively weak that I can scarcely venture outside the door. God has been good to me in this affliction; and my brethren and neighbours have shown me no little kindness. My religious experience

has been variable. Sometimes my pain has been so great as to make me unable to think of anything else, and sometimes, when not greatly suffering, my mind has been dark, and my heart unfeeling. But upon the whole, in my greatest pains, and in the prospect of death, I have felt great peace of mind and found rest in my Saviour. I believe I am not presumptuous in saying that I have found Him a very present help in trouble. I am convinced that this illness is a chastisement; and I have been searching for the sin which has occasioned it. I have been too lukewarm in the service of God, and too solicitous for the good opinions and commendations of men. That which rested much on my mind during my illness was the hypocritical religion with which this neighbourhood abounds. Oh, how different it is to the religion of the Bible! I feel guilty that I have not spoken to my neighbours with greater honesty and zeal." We are afraid that it is thus most of us will feel when we are approaching the hour of death.

Though not the recognised minister of any church, we find him early exercising some of the functions of the pastorate. We have before us a list of the members of the church at Bwlchygroes, drawn up very neatly, just like everything he ever did, in his own handwriting, and dated August the 12th, 1816. First there are two teachers, "Josiah Evans of Dyffryn," now, we

presume, the Rev. Josiah Evans of Pembrey; and "William Griffith, Ffosfantach." Next there are four "stewards," for be it known that the deacon of to-day was a steward then. They were "Jonathan James, Blaengilfach; Thomas John, Penrhippin; William Morris, Cnwcpoeth; and Benjamin Phillips, carpenter." Then come the private members in the alphabetical order of their *Christian* names. It does not seem that the surnames of the whole were known to their neighbours; for among the female members we have "Anne of Glanrhyd;" and among the males, "William, the shoemaker of Pantwedwst." At the head of the list there are sixteen females, who seem to have been either unmarried women, or wives whose husbands were not members. They are all either Annas or Annes; but lower down on the list and under the D's we have "David John of the Quarry," and "Anna John his wife;" and there were sixteen such pairs among the members. The host of the village was among the number, "Daniel James of the Star;" and so was the hostess, "Elizabeth James, his wife." Anna seems to have been a favourite name in the neighbourhood, for out of fifty-eight females there were no less than twelve who were known by it; while the Marys were only five. The whole church, including preachers and "stewards," numbered no less than ninety-five members.



Where is the preacher who has not been at a loss for a text? As the time to cry is drawing nearer and nearer, the question, "What shall I cry?" is becoming more and more serious. Those who have felt these solitudes themselves cannot but find some interest in the recital of similar trials endured by their brethren. The following entries from Mr. Griffiths' diary for October, 1815, will remind most of our ministerial readers of a frequent source of their own troubles.

"Wednesday, 11th. Much troubled in my mind this day about what to speak next Sabbath. Unable to get anything fixed in my mind, I endeavoured to spread my case before the Lord in secret, but have had no answer."

"Thursday. Much the same. Cannot get through into communion with God, though I have several times attempted it."

"Friday. Had firmer grasp in secret to day, but am under a heavy burden about the Sabbath. O Lord, what shall I do? What shall I say to the people? Nothing remains in my mind. Thou hast a sufficiency, and thou hast given a little unto me sometimes. O Lord, remember me again this once for the sake of Jesus. Amen."

Saturday was rather better, for he had found a text, and was able to write a little upon it; and the Sabbath which he had so much dreaded turned out after all "a very happy day." In the morning "he was very much helped." In the

afternoon it was better still, for some new thoughts on his subject came to his mind while he was preaching. In the evening he felt much afraid at the commencement. He was "tired in body and depressed in spirits," and feared, now that he had got on much better than he expected through the day, that he would break down at night. But it proved quite otherwise. "I was greatly helped, and had much pleasure. I thank thee, heavenly Father, for remembering me in mercy." After retiring to rest, however, he could not review the work of the day with entire satisfaction. He was afraid that he had succeeded better in his sermons than he had in his prayers. "To-day I felt more ease in speaking to men than I did in speaking to God, and I am sure that this is not a good sign."

Great and intense was the jealousy with which, at this early period of his life and ministry, he watched over the interests of the cause of Christ. He had made it pre-eminently his own. He had preferred Jerusalem above his chief joy; and when enemies without retarded her progress, or evils within disturbed her peace, it occasioned to him greater sorrow than could be caused by any calamity affecting his own worldly interests. In the early part of the year 1816, after much fear and trembling, he went on a fortnight's preaching tour through parts of Cardiganshire. Before he left home, he had said to the Lord Jesus, "With-

out thee I can do nothing," and had entreated His presence to go with him on his journey. His prayer was answered. In many places he was greatly helped. There were abundant evidences that God was with him. In the public means, in the society meetings which followed, and in the "sweet conversations" which he had with the brethren in the chapel-houses, and in the families with whom he tarried for a night, his soul was greatly refreshed. He returned home happy and grateful, feeling that he had received good himself, and hoping that he had been the means of doing some good to others; when lo, all at once his soul was cast down within him by the disastrous tidings that reached his ears. "The first thing I heard was that painful occurrences had taken place in the church after I had left home,—that brethren whom I greatly loved had fallen into serious disagreement with one another, and that at least as many as seven of them had kept back from the communion last Sabbath. I felt my spirit sinking within me, and I was overwhelmed with the fear that the Lord would forsake us as a church, because of our selfish worldliness. \* \* \* Spent the evening at home greatly depressed."

Two days later he refers to the same subject. The morning was spent in great heaviness, but not without earnest prayer that the Lord would appear for the salvation of his cause. In the after-

noon of that day a church meeting was held, with the view of healing the painful breach. Here it turned out better than he had feared. It became evident that the morning's prayers had not been offered in vain. Peace was restored. The offended brethren expressed their readiness to forgive one another. Some of them did so with tears, and the painful business was thus happily terminated. Still he is suspicious that all the evil has not been removed, for he concludes the entry with the prayer—"O Lord, give them broken and contrite hearts, and bestow the same blessing upon myself."

But let it not be supposed that in his anxiety for others, he either overlooked or forgot his own personal religion. On the contrary, we find him ever in conflict with his own inward sins, and making unremitting efforts for personal holiness. He closely watched the workings of his own heart, and often discovered there some of the tactics of the enemy. On one occasion, after he had been helped to speak in the meeting of the church at Bwlchygroes, he began to feel that he was somebody, and that it was well for the brethren that he was among them. But he soon discovered in these thoughts the hand of the enemy of his soul. "They are the devil's whisperings," he writes; "and how quickly he has changed his tone. Only yesterday he was telling me that I was absolutely worthless; to-day he tells me that

I am a great man. Lord Jesus, deliver me from his devices!"

Much time was devoted by him to self-examination. We will give our readers one example of these heart-searchings, and its results.

"This evening I spent some time in examining my religion, and enquiring what I have between me and God, if I were called to appear in his presence before the morning, I felt rather dark, but there are some things of which I believe I can say that I am sure.

"1. I am sure that I have often felt myself full of guilt and sorrow for my sin, and that I have found rest to my soul in thinking of the sacrifice of Christ, and his salvation as revealed in the gospel.

"2. I am sure that I have hundreds of times, solemnly and sincerely as I trust, given myself body and soul unto him, having no hope of being saved in any other way than through his free grace.

"3. I am sure that I know something of that which is said in Romans vii. 21, 22: 'I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.'

"4. I am sure that I have oftentimes found more pleasure in the work of the Lord, and especially in secret prayer, than I ever found in the ways of sin.

"5. I am sure that I feel a constant desire to live to the glory of God, and to be an instrument in his hand to help his cause.

"6. I *hope* I know what it is to receive faith, repentance, and forgiveness of sins, according to the gospel.

"7. I am sure that I do not know of any disagreement or ill-feeling between myself and any person in the church or in the world; and thus I intend to venture on the morrow, according to the commandment of Christ, to make remembrance of his precious death."

It was on Saturday evening, the 27th of January, 1810, and in view, as we have seen, of joining his brethren at the Lord's table on the following day, that this examination was made, and these conclusions were arrived at. Next morning we find him still absorbed in the same subject. "Lying awake before daylight, my soul was greatly blessed in meditating on the sufferings of the Saviour. I thought of him in the garden—before the council—scourged—crowned with thorns—bearing his cross—suffering himself to be nailed to it. For some moments my feelings were such that I cannot describe them. O how hideous sin appeared to me! O how lovely Jesus was to my soul!"

Religion and religious conversation were not confined to the pulpit or the chapel. It does not seem that any opportunity that offered itself was

allowed to pass without having "some religious talk." He meets his old friend and comrade, David Davies, who had introduced him to the religious circle at Bristol, and they "spent the afternoon happily in profitable conversation." Staying for a night at a farmhouse with three other friends, they "have great pleasure together in conversing of spiritual things." One Thursday night he spends at the house of Benjamin Evans, Llwyngrawys, and he has "profitable conversation with his host about the things of the gospel." Returning with eight others from a Monthly Meeting, they "enjoy much pleasure in repeating to one another the things which had impressed the mind of each at the services." On the first night of a Monthly Meeting at Mydrim, he is sent with another to stay with a family which did not profess religion; and as they went, they were in great concern for being enabled to leave some good impression on the minds of some of its members. "We were helped to deal honestly with these people. What the result will be, the Lord only knows. We spoke to them seriously of another world, and told them what they must feel before they can be saved. They received it all kindly, and told us much of their own feelings. I and my friend felt thankful that we were sent here." Who knows but that some members of that family are blessing God now for sending them under their roof? And who knows what

glorious results would follow if all under similar circumstances were to imitate the example of these pious young preachers?

Monthly Meetings and Associations were unto him at this time great events, and he attended them whenever it was practicable, always profiting by the teachings of the great and good men with whom he came into contact there, and especially by the gracious influences which the Lord was pleased to shed forth on these occasions. There were giants in the earth in those days. That mighty man of God, Ebenezer Morris, was then in the zenith of his power; the two talented brothers, Ebenezer and Thomas Richards, were then rising to the prime of manhood, and were moving assembled thousands by their mighty eloquence. In addition to these, there were John Evans, of New Inn, whose melting words distilled as the dew; David Charles, of Carmarthen, who seemed to live where diamonds grew, and who cast about the precious gems in lavish profusion; the eloquent and imaginative David Griffiths, of Llantood; the pathetic David Parry, and the fiery William Morris. These and others of the same stamp were the masters of the assembly in South Wales. Where they had come together, there was truly an assembly of prophets; and the young preachers of their day came among them with reverential awe, for in addition to the power of the men, there were un-



mistakeable evidences of the mighty power of God. We will accompany our young friend to one of these Associations, held at Llangeitho, the Jerusalem of Methodism in South Wales, on 7th and 8th of August, 1816.

He begins his journey with some other young friends on Tuesday, the 6th. The rain falls in torrents, but they travel nearly the whole of the day; and in the evening, fatigued with the journey, and drenched with the rain, they reach Pantmelyn, where they are taken in for the night, receive much kindness because they are on their way to the great assembly, "have much pleasure in conversing on spiritual things," and especially in listening to the words of their aged hostess, who lived on the verge of the Jordan, and was cheerfully and happily awaiting her turn to be taken across the flood to the land of promise.

Next morning the rain continues to descend. This caused our friend to examine himself as to his motive in leaving home. He prayed once, but could get no access. He made a second attempt, and succeeded better. He prayed that the Lord would rectify his motives; and with diffidence he asked him, if consistent with his will, to cause the rain to cease, that they might proceed on their journey with some degree of comfort. His prayer was answered, for before the time came for them to move, the rain had passed, and they reached Llangeitho before one

o'clock in the afternoon. At two o'clock there was a meeting of church officers. Here the circumstantialia of the cause were the subject of discussion. At four o'clock there was a public service in the open air. This was introduced by Thomas Jones, of Montgomeryshire; after which a powerful sermon was preached by Edward Williams of Flintshire, from Luke xiv. 23: "And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled." He spoke of the men who made excuse, and of the excuses they made, and solemnly warned the multitude to search, weigh, and avoid them. Coming to his text he said that the parable up to that point referred to the Jews, and that this was the first call to the Gentiles, and spoke powerfully of the House—the Feast—the free invitation to attend it, and the awful danger of neglecting it. After him came Thomas Richards. His text was Isaiah liii. 8: "And who shall declare his generation?" He spoke of the mediatorial offices of Christ, and his everlasting Godhead, and pointed out the awful danger of entertaining unworthy thoughts of him who is clothed with Divine majesty, and of slighting him whom God himself has crowned with glory and honour. There were thousands present on the occasion; and so powerful were the effects, that many retired from the field "weeping and rejoicing."

Next morning at six o'clock, the service was introduced by Ishmael Jones of North Wales; after which John Jones, who was likewise from the North, preached from Job xxxiii. 23, 24: "If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness; then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found ransom." He spoke, 1. Of the messenger. 2. That messenger as an interpreter. 3. His excellence: "One among a thousand." 4. The deliverance: "Deliver his soul," &c. There was much power with this discourse, and a great number were deeply affected. After him came David Parry. His text was Psalm i. 2: "But whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night." The heads are not given, but the sermon is described as lively and powerful, and the effect on the assembled multitude as overwhelming. It would have been most pleasant to remain to enjoy "the sweet sound" that followed, but there was not a moment to lose. The general society was to commence immediately, and this was a meeting of surpassing interest, for "a young man from London," Mr. James Hughes, afterwards the eminent Welsh Commentator, was to be ordained. The service was commenced with singing a hymn of praise, after which John Roberts (we presume of Llan-

gwm) read portions of the first epistle to Timothy, making some appropriate remarks, and then offered up a prayer. Mr. Williams of Lledrod, who had seceded from the Church of England, then read a paper on the constitution of the Calvinistic Methodist body, and their method of ordaining ministers, stating their reasons for it, and quoting several passages of scripture in support of it. He then referred to the young brother J. Hughes, and asked the representatives of the Connexion present whether it was their pleasure that he should examine him in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. This having been assented to by a general lifting up of hands, he proceeded with the examination; and the answers of the young candidate were so "correct, clear, weighty and scriptural, that all were astonished, and a great many were affected unto tears, seeing how the Lord upheld his young servant, and enabled him thus to answer in the presence of so many eminent ministers from North and South Wales." The charge, and a mighty charge it was, was delivered by Mr. Charles of Carmarthen. The ordination prayer was offered by Mr. Howells of Trehill, who had likewise seceded from the Establishment; and after some further conversation, the concluding prayer was offered by Ebenezer Morris. It was not strange that Mr. G. should say, "It was good for me to be there."

It was continual feasting. The public service

began at once. The accents of Ebenezer Morris's prayer had not died upon their ears, the thrill which his mighty voice, and still mightier thoughts had sent through their hearts had not subsided, when in the open field, and mingling with the overwhelming crowd, they found themselves carried into the presence of the throne of God in the earnest and impassioned opening prayer of Howells of Trehill. Then came a solemn and arousing discourse from John Roberts, from Micah vii. 9: "The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the men of wisdom shall see thy name; hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it." Then followed an English sermon, "an excellent sermon to those who understood it," from Psalm lxxxvii. 5, on the prosperity and permanence of the church; and then another sermon in Welsh by John Evans, from Isaiah xlii. 21: "He will magnify the law, and make it honourable." He spoke of righteousness, of God, and of the fullness that is treasured up in our blessed Redeemer to meet all the demands of the law and of justice. In addition to these three sermons, an address was delivered in this service by a young man who intended to go out as a missionary to the heathen. He gave a fearful picture of the state of the dark places of the earth, and said that it was his intention in a few months to cross the mighty ocean to bear to some of those benighted heathen the glad tidings

of salvation. He bade farewell to the Association, entreating the prayers of the assembly in his behalf. "Pray for me, pray for me, my brethren!" he said again and again; until at last, overcome by emotion, he burst into tears, and the multitude responded with loud weeping.

Brief was the time allowed for obtaining food for the body, for the next service commenced at two o'clock. Here, after prayer had been offered by David Rees of Llanvynydd, two sermons were delivered. The first was by William Roberts of Anglesea, then in the vigour of youth. His text was Acts x. 43; and his sermon is described as being "most authoritative." He was followed by Mr. Charles, from 1 Tim. i. 12. He spoke of believing in its relation to *that day*, and solemnly warned the assembly to be prepared for its coming.

But was not this multitude of religious services wearisome? Not in the least, for we find our young friends on their way home hastening to reach Abermeirig in time to hear two sermons from Messrs. Jones and Ellis from North Wales; and we have it on record that this service was as powerful as any that they had enjoyed at the great assembly. And it is not all over yet. The next morning they move early, and at ten o'clock they reach Moidroilyn, where they hear an excellent sermon from Thomas Richards on the "mystery of godliness;" and further on on their

journey homewards, at two o'clock of the same day, they have another service at Twrgwyn from J. Jones on "the resurrection of the dead." After this service they hasten towards their home, which they reach before sunset, blessing and praising God for all the wonderful things they had seen and heard.

In about two months after this there was another Association at Fishguard. Thither our friend went with more than usual fear, for it had been arranged that he should be examined there with a view to be received into the Connexion as a regular preacher. He had previously been received by the Monthly Meeting of his own county; but to pass the ordeal of the Association, to give a reason for the hope that was in him, to state his doctrinal views, and his motives for preaching the gospel in the presence of all those great men, was in his esteem a much more serious thing. We do not wonder that he trembled as he went. We do not wonder that on Tuesday night at Newport, Pembrokeshire, within a few miles of the scene of the weighty transaction which was to take place on the morrow, his sleep was disturbed by "fearful dreams." He dreamt that he stood in front of an armed battalion, who, all pointing their muskets at him, were about to fire. This was pretty much the same sort of thing as he feared in the morning from that battalion of great

preachers before whom he must stand. But it turned out better than he expected. God stood by him, and the brethren received him with great kindness.

But the Association proved of far greater importance to him than he had anticipated. Quite unexpected by him, a step was taken here which gave a direction to the whole of his future life, and decided the field of his future labour. A letter was received from the Right Honourable Lady Barham, requesting the Association to send a suitable young man to labour in the destitute peninsula of Gower, in Glamorganshire. Mr. Griffiths was chosen for this work by the unanimous voice of the brethren; and though he was taken quite by surprise, and was almost overwhelmed at the idea of leaving his home, and engaging in so important an undertaking, after much thought and prayer he consented to go. We shall follow him there in the next Chapter.



## CHAPTER IV.

Gower—scenery—moral darkness—a scene in the service—disappointment—Rev. Rees Jones—uncertainty—provisional appointment to Trinity, Llanmadock.

IN the days of our early childhood we were acquainted with a little old woman who spoke neither English nor Welsh, but a strange mixture of that kind of the former language which is spoken in Gower, and of that kind of the latter which is spoken in the Vale of Glamorgan. We were curious to know where she had come from; and one day when she had overtaken us in the Castle fields on our way to Cowbridge school, she said, in answer to our inquiries, that she was a native of a distant place lying between us and the setting sun, which place was called Gower. We had some idea before as to the locality of the spot that was known by that name, for it was a common saying in our native neighbourhood, when the sun was drawing near the western horizon, that “the Gower people pulled the ropes.” Upon further asking her what Gower was—was it a village? or was it a parish? she answered that it was neither, but “a place, a large place, a very large place indeed.” For the information of those of our readers who know little more of Gower than we then knew ourselves, we beg to state that it is a peninsula of about twenty miles in length, varying from four to

eight miles in breadth, bounded by the Swansea Bay and Bristol Channel on the south, and the Burry Estuary on the north, stretching in nearly a westerly direction from Swansea, and terminating in the bold and rocky headland commonly known as the Worm's Head. It comprises seventeen parishes, with a population of about seven thousand souls, nearly the whole of whom speak only the English language. It is not on the way from any part of the world to another; and those who pass it by land in going from Glamorgan to Carmarthenshire, see about as little of it as those who pass it by sea in going from Waterford to Bristol. It is rarely visited by strangers, save a few who are attracted to it by its beautiful scenery and interesting geological remains. A writer in "Chambers' Journal," for Nov. 13, 1858, describes its south coast as "iron-bound by lofty limestone cliffs, affording some of the finest coast scenery in England. Those who like a thoroughly good excursion will be much pleased with Gower, for there is ample entertainment for the geologist, antiquary, and artist—the whole peninsula teeming with relics of the past, in the shape of ruined castles, Druidical remains, not to mention those older relics entombed in the rocks around, compared with which those of the human era are as a drop of water in the ocean of time."

It is evident that the district was once inhabited by a Welsh-speaking population. Most of

its parishes, and many of its farmhouses, are called by Welsh names; names which, bye the bye, are cruelly murdered in the mouths of the present inhabitants.

We are told that, about the year 1110, Henry I. admitted into England great numbers of Flemings, who, by the inundation of the sea in their own country, were compelled to seek elsewhere for new habitations. He planted them at first in the waste parts of Yorkshire; but upon complaints made to him after his return from France, he removed them to the country conquered from the Welsh about Roose and Pembroke. There are unmis- takable evidences that the people of Gower are of the same origin as those of the south of Pem- brokeshire;\* but the fact that there are so many places in the former bearing Welsh names, while in the latter such places are few and far between, makes it quite clear that they had settled in Pem-

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\*The following writer, however, is of a different opinion: "According to Caradoc of Llancarvon, Swansea Castle was built in the year 1099 by Henry Beaumont, Earl of Warwick, who, acting on the system of the other Norman freebooters of the age, made war upon the sons of Caradoc ap Iestyn, who then held the district of Gower, in order to enrich himself by the spoils he might be able to wrest from them. After the subjugation of Gower, Henry Beaumont brought over a colony of English settlers from Somersetshire, to whom he gave a large proportion of the lands. Their descendants yet remain here, separated by their language and manners from the native population, with whom, like the Flemings in Pembrokeshire, they scarcely ever intermarry."—"Description of South Wales," by Rev. T. Rees, 1819, p. 726.

brokeshire very long before their advent into Gower. Perhaps there were later immigrations of Flemings, who settled as near as they could find room to their countrymen who had preceded them, or it may be that those in Pembrokeshire, increasing in numbers and straitened for room, pushed eastward along the coast as far as Swansea and Gower. Be this as it may, they are to the present time a people by themselves, and have manners, customs, and traits of character which distinguish them from the Welsh, and prove them to be of foreign extraction. It does not seem that all the Welsh were expelled from Gower at the time of the Flemish immigration, for there still remains in the language of the inhabitants here and there a Welsh word. Their annual parish merry-making was called a "mab-sant" while it continued to be observed, and it was not given up until very recently; indeed, we believe that a ghost of it is kept up under that name in one village to the present day. It is not a "hob" that they have at the side of their fire-place, but a "pentan;" and when they have a tooth extracted, they feel a "gloes." There may be more such words, but these are all the ruins of the ancient language which we have been able to discover among them. A line extending in a westerly direction from Swansea to Penclawdd on the Burry Estuary would pretty nearly mark the boundary between the Welsh

and English languages. To the north of that line there is very little of the latter, while to the south of it there is scarcely any of the former. It passes through a little village in which the parish pound of Llanrhidian Higher is situated. It would seem that when it was built, the people on either side contended with each other for the honour of giving it a name; that those on the south would have it called a "pound," while those on the north stood out for "ffald," and that they compromised the matter by calling it "poundffald." The dispute, if it ever existed, has long been forgotten, and it is by that duoglot name, the last syllable of which is only a repetition of the first in another language, that the place is known at the present day.

The religious state of Gower, until a very recent period, was very far behind other portions of the Principality. The Methodist revival had commenced early in the last century; and at its close there was scarcely a Welsh-speaking district that was not well supplied with the means of grace; but the barrier of language had stood in the way of its extension to Gower; and consequently that district was, at the close of the first decade of the present century, in much the same state as the whole of Wales was before the days of Howell Harries and Daniel Rowlands. In a dingle between Parkmill and Ilston there are still to be seen the remains of an old Baptist Chapel

built in the time of the Stuarts; and it is said that at one time it was the home of a large and flourishing church. It was the bitter persecution that prevailed in those unhappy days that led to its being erected in that out-of-the-way place. Worshipers came together there from great distances; and perhaps it was more frequented by the people of Swansea and the neighbourhood beyond than it was by the Gowerians themselves. At any rate, all traces of early Nonconformist light had vanished from Gower before the middle of the last century. George Whitfield visited the country once, and preached at a village originally called Llwynon, but which the inhabitants have transformed into Lunnon. A pious old lady of our acquaintance, who some years ago was taken to her rest, told us that she was one of the large assembly who listened to "that wonderful sermon." A feeble Wesleyan cause had been established on the south side of the peninsula. We know of no other stated means of grace, but such as were held in the parish churches, where unhappily there was but little earnestness in the ministers, or piety in the people. On the whole, Gower, at the beginning of the present century, may be described as a land of gross ignorance, of darkness and the shadow of death.

In the year 1813, the Right Hon. Baroness Barham, mother of the Hon. and Rev. Baptist W. Noel, was led by Providence to settle in this

benighted and neglected district. Her ladyship fearing the Lord, and largely partaking of the spirit of the Saviour, resolved to make an effort to bless her new neighbours with the light of the gospel. By the advice of the Rev. William Kemp, then minister of the Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel at Swansea, she applied to the Association of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists for a minister to labour in Gower; and in compliance with that application, the Rev. Rees Jones, then of Anglesea, was chosen for the new field; and he settled at Penclawdd, just on the boundary line which we have already described. For a while he preached and held a Sabbath School at a dwelling-house in the centre of the village. He found the people in a deplorable state of ignorance; and for a time it was very difficult to get them to behave properly during the solemnization of divine worship. On one occasion, when Mr. Jones had read his text, and was proceeding with his discourse, a woman entered the room, and fixing her eyes angrily upon a neighbour who had preceded her there, addressed her aloud with the words, "Pay me that hafe crawn." "Me dannat aw thee a hafe crawn," was the answer. Their passions became fiercer, and their voices became louder. "Thee dost, thee dost," said the first. "Me dannat, me dannat," said the second. "Hush, both of you," said Mr. Jones; "let me speak now." "Tell her to pay me, then," said

the first. "Me dannat aw her nothing," said the second; and it was some time before the angry disputants were silenced, and the preacher was able to proceed with his sermon.

In the mean time a chapel had been erected at Burry Green, near the centre of the country, and not far from Lady Barham's residence. It was here that she herself worshipped; and for a long time it was chiefly supplied by ministers from England. Soon afterwards a chapel was built for Mr. Jones at Penclawdd. But the wants of the district were as yet far from being supplied, and her ladyship, as we stated at the close of the preceding chapter, applied to the Association at Fishguard for a suitable young man to teach a school and to preach the gospel in another part of the peninsula. The request was sent by Mr. Jones. He was well acquainted with the district, and therefore knew better than any one else what kind of man was required; and he could not think of any one more likely to answer the purpose than the zealous young soldier whom he had met at Manchester. With this view the brethren unanimously coincided, and Mr. Griffiths received the appointment.

This took place on the 22nd of October, 1816; and it was arranged that he should move to his new field of labour in the beginning of the following year. It was not without a severe struggle



that he consented to leave the scene of his childhood, and of his early ministerial exercises ; and his friends and brethren at home were equally loath to part with him. When after his return from Fishguard he attended the church meeting at Bwlchygroes, and told the brethren that he was about to leave them, they were grieved at the intelligence, and, to use his own expressive words, "great sorrow came upon us all." The few remaining weeks he had to spend here he employed in fulfilling his Sabbath engagements, winding up the affairs of his school, visiting the churches of the neighbourhood, and bidding farewell to his many Christian friends. On the 3rd of January many of his relatives came together to take leave of him, and he "felt some meltings of heart and much liberty of spirit in praying with them." Two days later, being the Sabbath, he preached his farewell sermon at the chapel to which he belonged, "and the effects of the word were visible upon many." "I had a hard trial this afternoon," he adds, "in bidding farewell to my dear brethren and sisters in the Lord at Bwchygroes. I preached in the evening at Blaengilfach, and had much of the same trial." The following morning, his dear brother Samuel accompanying him, he took his departure for Gower, preaching twice a-day as he went, enjoying much of the Lord's presence, "especially at Kidwelly and Llanelly;"

and on the 10th of January, 1817, he reached Penclawdd.

But disappointment met him at the very threshold. The first thing that his dear friend, Mr. Rees Jones, had to tell him was, that Lady Barham had completely changed her plans, that she had been induced to relinquish her connection with the Calvinistic Methodists, and to give up that part of Gower in which she had once intended that he should labour, and that, therefore, he was not wanted; but that the change in her ladyship's mind had taken place too late to apprise him of it before he had left his home. And now what was he to do? He had given up his school, his principal means of subsistence, and had been at considerable expense in preparing for this place; and now as he was about to enter the door seemed to close against him. It was a comfort to him to think that he had never sought the appointment, that he had only come at the request of the Association, and in obedience to what he conscientiously believed to be a call from the Lord. At the same time he felt that he had been too sanguine, and that this blight to his prospects was necessary to draw him closer to his God. On the following Thursday, he received a note from Lady Barham, informing him that she did not want him, and that in consequence of some recent pecuniary losses, she could not keep him; but that since he had come, if he

wished to remain at Penclawdd for three months, she would give him a small, *very small* weekly remuneration. To this proposal he at once acceded, trusting that before the expiration of that period the Lord would be pleased in some manner to direct him how to proceed.

The first Sabbath after his arrival he preached at Penclawdd morning and evening in Welsh, Mr. Jones also preaching before him each time in English. In the morning he found it "rather hard," but it was far better in the evening. "The people were remarkably attentive, considering they were only beginning." Reviewing the day before retiring to rest, he says, "This night I felt thankful to the Lord for all that he has done for me, and for the company of Rees Jones, a blessing which I cannot too highly value."

While he resided at Penclawdd, he and Mr. Jones lodged at the same house, and pursued their studies together. The attachment between them became stronger and stronger, although they were in many respects at the antipodes of one another. Mr. Griffiths was the personification of neatness, order and punctuality. Everything that he had to do was done at the right time, and everything that he possessed was kept in its own proper place. Though no one could for a moment suspect him of vanity, there was always a neatness about his personal appearance which led one to infer that every article of dress

had been put on with the greatest care. Mr. Jones, on the contrary, was not by any means particular in these matters. If things went to their places of their own accord, all well and good, otherwise let them take their chance; he did not think it worth while to take the trouble to put them in order. He was a man of strong attachments, and of deep convictions. That which he believed he believed firmly; that which he opposed, he opposed mightily; and that which he hated, he hated intensely. The mighty grip of his large, muscular hand, and his firm and determined tread as he strode along, were emblems of his mental characteristics. He wrote his sermons on four pages of very small note paper; they generally contained three or four general heads, while each head had about as many sub-divisions, and each sub-division was either proved or illustrated with two or three quotations of scripture; and we have frequently heard it remarked by those who had the pleasure of hearing him, that it was in explaining these scripture texts, and shewing their bearing upon his subject, the great powers of his mind were chiefly manifested. He was, in the widest sense of the phrase, at home in the scriptures. When Mr. Griffiths sat to study his sermons, he had never any need to refer to his Concordance when his friend Mr. Jones was at the other end of the table. He had only to mention a part of the verse that he wanted

to find, and immediately he should hear it all word for word; and know exactly where to find it. And this was not the only, nor the most important assistance he received from him at the outset of his Gower life, and for years afterwards. In reading his journal, we do not wonder that in blessing God for his many favours, he did not forget "the company of Rees Jones."

Before the three months over which he had engaged to remain had expired, it was arranged between him and Lady Barham that he should remain yet another quarter on the same terms, "and go on as before." His ministry was beginning to tell upon some of the people, and a very strong attachment was springing up between him and the young disciples. At first, the thoughts of returning to his home suggested the question, "What shall I do there, now that I have given up my school?" But now the same thoughts suggested another question, "How can I leave these poor people?" But there did not seem to be any alternative; according to present appearances, leave them he must at the expiration of the half year. The prospect was most distressing to his mind. January 24, 1817, he writes: "When I rose this morning these dark places were much on my mind. It goes indeed deep into my feelings every time I think of returning homeward from this neighbourhood without doing any good. There is now no prospect of its being

otherwise. At the same time I am deeply impressed with the conviction that if the Lord has work for me here, he will open some door for my support, that I may remain." And again a few weeks later, referring to the same subject, he writes: "I had many troubles this day respecting my present situation, but I am sensible that most of them were from the evil one. I was disposed to quarrel with the people who had brought me here only to be disappointed; and some times my mind was almost overwhelmed; but blessed be the Lord, I found rest in the thought that all things are under the direction of my heavenly Father, and that if I am his, he will cause all things to work together for my good."

It was not, however, the will of Providence that he should leave. A "door" was "opened," although at the time it appeared but for a short season. Lady Barham had built a little Chapel in a village called Froglane, between Cheriton and Llanmadock, on the shore of the Burry Estuary, and about seven miles south-west of Penclawdd. This small building, long, low, and thatched, half chapel—for it had a pulpit—and half schoolroom, for it had no pews—was called "Trinity Chapel." A school was held here on week-days, and sermons preached on some evening in the week, and once, and occasionally twice, on the Sabbath. Mr. Griffiths,

during his months of suspense at Penclawdd, went down frequently to preach at Trinity, and some times was "very much helped, though the people seemed exceedingly wild." The schoolmaster's name was Philip Gwyn, a most earnest and devoted young man. But his health was indifferent. Lady Barham kindly gave him a month's holiday to recruit his strength, sending Mr. Griffiths in the mean time to supply his place at the school. The young man, however, was never able to return to his duties. His illness increased, and after a few months he died. This unexpected event converted a temporary measure into a permanent engagement. Mr. Griffiths was appointed schoolmaster at Trinity; with the additional duty of preaching there, as well as at other places in the surrounding neighbourhood. Thus the clouds for the present disappeared, and he saw a prospect of being allowed to remain in "the dark place that was so much upon his mind."

## CHAPTER V.

Divers tongues—Mr. Griffiths in school—death of pupils—ignorance—sinful customs—sermon against the “mab-sant”—jealousy—letter from the Rev. W. Kemp, &c., &c.

MR. GRIFFITHS'S new sphere of labour was but a short distance from Penclawdd; but the character of the people was very different. Whether or no Penclawdd is *in* Gower is an open question, not fully decided to the present day. There were many there who understood the Welsh language, and understood it better than they did the English, and it was necessary, therefore, that the preacher each time he mounted the pulpit should speak with divers tongues; a most unpleasant exercise, as every one who has tried it can testify. Each section is jealous of its rights, and anxious for its full share. If the preacher happens to speak a few minutes longer in one language than in the other, he is sure in one way or another to be given to understand that he has sinned. He may get warmer in one language than in the other; that likewise is a sin which must be visited with displeasure. When he has introduced his sermon, given his heads, announced his sub-divisions, enlarged upon each of them, pronounced his peroration, and got quite warm in one language, it is anything but agreeable to begin again, and go through it all in another, and especially when he is conscious that



nearly all in his congregation have understood every word that he has spoken from the beginning. To speak the same things over again *immediately* is most disagreeable to himself, and all the while he cannot divest himself of the impression that it is very insipid to the bilingual portion of his hearers. But there is no help for it. Penclawdd stands where the two languages, like two seas, meet, and produce a current over which it is difficult for a preacher successfully to sail. We often found it so to our cost, and frequently were we tempted to speak ill of the people who attempted to build the tower of Babel; and many times did we wish in the depths of our heart that the boundaries of Gower were better defined, that the line between the "two languages" was such as to make it impossible for the one to pass over to the other.

Penclawdd, however, to some extent felt the influence and partook of the character of the Welsh districts abutting upon it. But Trinity was in quite a different neighbourhood, where the Welsh language was unknown, and where Welsh influences had never reached. Everything peculiar to Gower and to its people lived and flourished there undisturbed, and in the highest perfection.

Mr. Griffiths loved school-keeping, and he possessed that highest and most essential requisite in a schoolmaster—love for the souls of

the children committed to his charge. He felt that he was placed among them not merely to instruct them in the first rudiments of secular knowledge, but likewise, and chiefly, to teach them the way of salvation. Not a day was allowed to pass without calling their attention to that which concerned their everlasting peace; and his various feelings in these exercises are noted in his diary with as much earnest minuteness as his various experiences in public preaching. He expressed as much gratitude to God for helping him "to speak to the children" as for giving him "strength to preach to the great congregation." The death of one of his pupils was to him a matter of serious concern. One Thomas Owen of Bovehill died rather suddenly, and great was his sorrow. A few months later a little girl was taken away from the same house; and he poured forth the deep feelings of his soul in the following strain:—"O death! fierce king of terrors, how great is thy sway! O devouring grave, when wilt thou say, It is enough? O destructive sin, it is thy poison that makes all this triumph for death and the grave! O thou enemy of God and men, thou source of all woe! This day died another of my scholars, Elizabeth Howells of Bovehill, from the same house and family as Thomas Owen, whom we so lately lost. She was about fifteen years of age. O my dear girl! I often indulged the thought, from thy

steady deportment, from thy active mind, and from thy great attachment to thy Bible, that the Lord in future years would make thee a pillar of truth in his church below, and a monument of converting grace. But alas! His thoughts are not our thoughts. Thou art gone; gone, I hope, to enjoy sweet communion with that Saviour whose blessed word thou hast so often repeated at Trinity School.

"Called at Bovehill, and saw the corpse of E. Howells. Nothing but clay! The nobler part is gone. O happy child! I trust that all thy sorrow is ended for ever, and that thy dear soul is before the heavenly throne."

Next day he writes: "A very remarkable day. Mingled feelings of sorrow and joy. I felt great sorrow in following E. Howells to the grave, but I had great joy in the behaviour of the other children of the school. They surrounded the coffin while I was preaching in the room where the deceased lay; and, O how well they answered some questions I then put to them before the people. How sweetly they sang the praises of God, and how deeply they were affected with the solemnity of the occasion."

But if the children were to him a crown of rejoicing, the adults of the neighbourhood were very much otherwise. These parts were at that time enveloped in the thickest moral darkness; and even in matters appertaining to

this life, the people were deplorably ignorant. Mr. Rees Jones had occasionally preached before this period at a house on the hill side, not far from Trinity Chapel, and on one of these occasions the mistress of the house where he stayed for the night asked him whether the sermon which he had preached when he was down last was true. Upon being answered in the affirmative, she replied, "It is a very dreadful truth then. John Beynon could not stand it, and he walked out. As for me, I resolved to stay to the end, for I was all the while hoping that it was not true; but when I came home, and heard the girl reading the book, I began to fear that there was some truth in it after all." Soon after Mr. Jones had retired to rest, he found that the blankets were unmistakeably damp; and rather than expose himself to imminent danger by continuing to lie between them, he got up, dressed himself, and spent the remainder of the night alternately sitting and pacing up and down the room. Next morning when his hostess asked him how he had slept, he answered that he had not slept at all, that the blankets were so fearfully damp that it would be madness to attempt it. Great was her wonder that such a thing could happen. She could not think how it was possible for them to be damp at all, *for it was only on the previous day, a few hours before they were put on the bed, she had washed them with her own hands.*

When preaching on Sunday evenings at Trinity Chapel, Mr. G. was often disturbed by the boisterous merriment of the young people outside. Crowds of them walked up and down in front of the chapel; and now and then two or three would drop in, only to run out again to join their comrades, and to relate to them the daring exploit they had performed. These, be it understood, were not children, but grown up young men and women. Many of those who were inside scarcely knew how to observe the proper decorum. On one occasion the preacher himself almost lost the equilibrium of his gravity. Having made use of that very common expression—"I do not intend to keep you very long"—one of his congregation answered aloud that he thought that was the best way, for the people were tired, and wanted to go home.

He often preached in the dwelling-houses of the surrounding neighbourhood; but it was not always that the people were willing to open their houses for that purpose. One man gave him permission to preach at his house "just for wance;" and when after the close of the sermon he publicly asked the good man whether he should announce another service there on the following week, the reply was, "I dont like it, for there is such trouble to move the big tabble out of the room;" and in answer to the same question at another place, the master of the house

said, "I dont know—we shall hear what the people will saay about the sarmont to naight."

The annual festival known by the name of *mabsant* was to him a source of great trouble. Great crowds frequented this ungodly gathering, and the Sabbath was the great day of their feast. The first time it was held after his settlement at Trinity, it told disastrously on his congregation. In great sorrow he writes: "Preached at Trinity this evening. I had but few hearers, as there happened to be a meeting of the devil's in the village at the same hour for drinking and dancing. While praying and preaching on this occasion, I felt deeply for these poor deluded people, and endeavoured to bear faithful testimony against their sin."

The following year he resolved to be prepared for it, for on Saturday, the 7th November, we find him in his study, and his "mind much engaged how to speak against the ungodly feast which is to begin next week in this village." He did speak against it most decidedly. The subject of his discourse was Lot's departure from Sodom. "I felt," says he, "my spirit warm within me when speaking of their awful sin against God and against their own souls. I took occasion also to reprove them for playing cards, another very common sin amongst them. The Lord was pleased to give me liberty and earnestness in speaking. Some wept, while others appeared

full of indignation." He did not speak in vain. The following Sabbath, the principal day of festivity, he had a large congregation. He found that not one-fourth of the usual number attended the "mabsant," while all his hearers, instead of going to the ale-house, as they were wont to do, went straight from the service to their homes. "The publicans are in great rage against me for this," he writes, "and are seeking an opportunity to revenge. May the Lord pardon their sin, and open their eyes to see their awful state before it is too late."

The ignorance and sinful customs of the people were by no means the only adverse influences with which he had to contend. Trinity Chapel stood between two parish churches, and at no great distance from either. There was a young clergyman at one of these who gave him no little uneasiness. We do not mean to affirm that he was perfectly free from those weaknesses to which the best of men are liable. He had doubtless to struggle in his own mind with the promptings of jealousy and rivalry. But this we can say, that we never knew a man who manifested less of that spirit than he. It was the fear that the above clergyman sought to draw the people after himself and not to the Saviour, that distressed him, although he was afraid that there was mingled with that feeling some amount of selfishness. His great object was the promotion of

the cause of Christ in Gower; and when the "new parson" had just arrived, and he found the chapel that was usually full almost deserted, in consequence of "the people's flocking to church," we do not wonder that he was grieved, for he saw that the minds of some whom he hoped to be beginning to learn the way of truth were getting unsettled by "running," as he expressed it, "after novelties." Once he went himself to hear this clergyman on a week evening, and was rather favourably impressed, though "there was nothing remarkable in his sermon." Some time afterwards the clergyman came to hear him, and, to his great distress, that evening he got among the clouds, and was so confused that he hardly knew what he was speaking. "I felt my proud heart disposed to fight against God, and so much the more because the clergyman was present. I suspect that I was more afraid of man than of God. O how hard it is properly to humble this heart of mine." His trials from this source, however, were of short duration. After a few weeks things found their level, and he found his chapel, which for a time had been almost deserted, as well attended as ever.

Annoyance came from another quarter, and that a quarter from which he had a right to expect help and encouragement. Bethesda Chapel, where Lady Barham herself attended, is at a distance of less than two miles from Trinity. This chapel, as



we have already stated, was supplied for the most part by ministers from England. But it was by no means well attended. While Trinity was often crowded to the door on Sunday evening, the minister who supplied at Bethesda had often to speak to not a few empty benches. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Griffiths was more popular than Lady Barham's English supplies. It is not at all strange that he should be; nothing is more natural than that the people should like best the preacher whom they could best understand. Mr. Griffiths did not use many words that were not in their vocabulary, while the learned strangers at Bethesda soared, in language at least, far above their reach. We remember hearing a minister in England, in speaking of the grace of God in the heart of man, expressing himself in the following style:—"Its development is accelerated by the assimilation of elements adapted to its own nature." That is all very true, and quite intelligible to a learned assembly; but a preacher who was in the habit of expressing himself in such language, would stand but a poor chance of gathering a congregation in Gower. The supplies at Bethesda laid the paucity of attendance there to the charge of the services at Trinity; and they at length prevailed on Lady Barham to forbid services there at the same hour as they were preaching at the great chapel. Mr. Griffiths was greatly distressed at being hampered thus in his

efforts, and he expresses himself on the subject in his diary in strong terms. He bitterly lamented the spirit from which such interference proceeded, and foresaw in it the sources of disastrous results to the good cause which he had so much at heart. It turned out as he had expected. The attendance at Bethesda was not at all improved, while the great numbers who usually attended at Trinity—were scattered abroad like sheep which have no shepherd. Lady Barham was not long before she saw that she had committed a mistake, and Trinity was again opened on Sunday evenings. That excellent man, the Rev. W. Kemp, who was at that time minister of the Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel at Swansea, was on the closest terms of intimacy with Mr. Griffiths. The following letter, received about the time of which we are writing, will explain itself:—

*“Swansea, Sept. 23, 1820.*

“MY DEAR GRIFFITHS,—Do you think it is consistent with the rules of the Welsh Methodist Societies to *pay debts*? for a brother of mine has incurred a debt, and has never said or thought anything (so far as I know) about paying it. Some time ago he came to me, and begged me to go down to Cheriton to attend a public meeting, where he required two sermons. I trust my Master was with me supplying what was required, for which I am infinitely indebted to Him. I now want my brother to repay me, and to preach for me at half-past ten and six o'clock on October 1st. Lady Barham has agreed to this. For his encourage-

ment, I have to inform him that our dearest Lord and Master has plenty in store to enable my brother (William Griffiths is his name) to be honest. Our friends here will most readily put a guinea in his pocket. Perhaps he will have no objection to speak for twenty minutes at Greenhill at two—if they should have no preacher.

“I published you last night to be here to-morrow week. If you do not preach at Greenhill in the afternoon, have the goodness to publish a Society to be held at our chapel at half-past two.

“I expect to set off for London on Tuesday night, and beg an interest in your prayers, that the Lord may indeed go with me, according to his precious promise. May He bring you here in the fulness of his Spirit, prays, my dear brother,

“Yours most affectionately in Christ,

“WILLIAM KEMP.”

In compliance with the above invitation, he went to Swansea. This was his first appearance before an English town congregation. A good number of the upper middle class of Swansea were among Mr. Kemp's hearers, and the thought of preaching *to them* weighed most heavily on his bashful and timid mind. He had to preach in English morning and evening at the Burrows Chapel, and in the afternoon at Greenhill in Welsh. Of this latter engagement he thought little or nothing. Among his Welsh friends, and preaching in his native language, he would feel at home. It was the idea of preaching in English to Mr. Kemp's “grand congregation” that was formidable. But the event proved the very reverse

of that which he had anticipated.- "I was kept from sinking," he writes; "but I felt a degree of nervousness and fear in the presence of this great and grand assembly. O what a weak, sinful creature I am! Why am I confounded in the presence of dust and ashes? Why am I so insensible of the presence of Jehovah? I had a great amount of liberty in preaching morning and evening. The great majority of the congregation listened most attentively, and several appeared deeply impressed. It was very different in the Welsh chapel, where I found it difficult to keep up the attention of the people; indeed, very few appeared to listen at all." That evening was spent most happily in the society of the heavenly Mrs. Diamond—well remembered by many of the Swansea people to this day as a mother in Israel—and under whose hospitable roof he stayed for the night. "I felt great liberty," says he, "in family prayer and spiritual conversation with that aged saint, Mrs. Diamond. She is a true Mary, and has indeed chosen the good part. All her conversation savours of Christ; and this evening once or twice she appeared in raptures of joy in speaking his praises. O how I was refreshed in her company. Here indeed I was delighted to remain for the night, and would be glad if I could stay for many days and nights more."

During the time which he spent at Trinity, his

life may be truly described in the words of the Apostle Paul: "In labours more abundant." His health was anything but good. Very often we find him "in great bodily weakness." In one week we find him, besides attending to his daily school duties, preaching five sermons, and attending one "society meeting at Bethesda," and one prayer meeting at Trinity; and this is a fair average of the work which he had to perform month after month, and year after year. It is no wonder, therefore, that he often felt "weak in body and depressed in mind." Exhausted nature weighed down his spirits, and many a time did he think that the close of his days was at the door. On one of these occasions he sent a note to Lady Barham, acquainting her with his serious illness, and requesting her to be so kind as to send him some medicine. She complied with his request; but the "note" which accompanied the "pills" contained some expressions which sent his spirits into still lower depths than they were in before. There had been a slight misunderstanding, but it was speedily removed, for a few days afterwards he had an interview with her ladyship, and "was much refreshed in mind" before they parted.

The great esteem in which Lady Barham held him at the time may be seen in the following letter:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I feel very thankful at your report of the school, and also convinced that I have not been thankful enough for what my blessed Lord has done. When we consider the value of one immortal soul, it seems worth the labour of a whole life to be the instrument of bringing it to the Lord Jesus Christ. May the Lord continue to own your labours of love among this people, and give you much encouragement. I hope you feel able to pray for me, for indeed I greatly need your prayers. I am very weak in body, and weaker still in soul; yet, blessed be my dear Lord, in moments of solitude he sometimes feasts me with the sweet wine of the covenant, and then all trials seem light. I could say much, but I cannot write; but I do not wish to appear ungrateful for your kind and welcome notes.

"I am, with Christian friendship,  
 "Yours in the blessed bonds of the everlasting Gospel,  
 "BARHAM."

He remained at Trinity for three years and ten months, at the close of which period, and on the 7th of March, 1821, he was removed to another sphere, the scenes and vicissitudes of which we shall endeavour briefly to describe.

## CHAPTER VI.

Removal to Pilton Green—affecting separation—school commenced—interest created—some impressions made—Immanuel Chapel—Mr. Hammerton—unpleasantness—correspondence—rupture—farewell address at Immanuel.

ON the south-west coast of Gower, and in the vicinity of its renowned cliffs and caves, are situate the somewhat populous villages of Porteynon, Overston, Middleton, and Rhosilly. The labours of Lady Barham and her ministers had not hitherto extended to this part. Occasional sermons had been delivered in dwelling-houses here and there, but no sustained effort had been put forth for the benefit of this most thickly-populated portion of the peninsula. Wesleyanism had obtained a slight footing here, and the people who thought anything at all about religion were very strongly prejudiced against Calvinistic preachers. It is not strange that it should have been so, for they had been taught to associate that form of theology with lost babes, poor penitent and heart-broken sinners turning away unblessed and unheeded from the throne of mercy, because they were not the elect; and the wanton and the wicked, the drunken and the profane, freely admitted into the kingdom of heaven because they happened to belong to that favoured number. Of Calvinism itself they knew nothing, and they shrank with horror from the caricature of it that had been presented to them by men who

were perhaps as ignorant of its doctrines as they were themselves.

Very near the centre between the above-named villages, and not very far from either of them, stands Pilton Green, and it was determined that Mr. Griffiths should remove to that spot to open a day-school, and endeavour to establish a preaching station. It was with great reluctance that he gave up his beloved charge at Trinity. The parting scene was most solemn and affecting. Let us again refer to his diary:—

“March 4th, 1821. In the evening I preached my farewell sermon at Trinity from Acts xx. 20, 21. Towards the latter part I was much affected, and my hearers were under deep impressions. I also catechized the children, and publicly before the congregation delivered up to their parents the charge I had of them as their schoolmaster, endeavoring to press their solemn duty upon their consciences. May the Lord bless it to them. It was a time of deep solemnity and painful feelings.”

On the following day he rode to Pilton Green, where he “assisted the carpenter in fitting up the house” for the reception of his school, and for the holding of religious services; and two days later there was a public opening service, when a sermon was preached, the rules of the new school were read, and the names of 37 scholars enrolled. Above 100 applied for admission, but for the present there was not sufficient room



to admit them. The following Sabbath he preached at the "school-house" morning and evening, and the congregations were very large, the population of the villages around having flocked thither in great numbers. His views respecting his new field of labour were most unfavourable, and it was with many sore misgivings that he entered upon it. "The place," says he, "is a barren wilderness with regard to personal religion. There does not appear to me to be one converted soul in all the neighbourhood round about;" and bitterly did he lament the want of some one with whom he could freely converse on religious subjects. The school, however, went on prospering, and sometimes he felt "great liberty in speaking to the children about their souls." The congregation likewise continued to increase, and there were visible impressions made on some of the hearers. Very soon the old house became too small to contain those who came together to hear the word, and on the 17th of May, just two months and ten days after the school was first opened, the foundation stone of a new chapel was laid. The work was rapidly carried on, and speedily finished, for on the 22nd of August following the new edifice, which was called "Immanuel Chapel," was publicly opened.

At Trinity, the scene of his former labours, no church had been formed. It was looked

upon and intended only as an outpost of the church at Bethesda. Immanuel Chapel was at a much greater distance, and it was thought desirable that those who were brought to repentance here should be formed into a separate church. The idea, however, of taking this step pressed heavily on Mr. Griffiths's mind. He was afraid of too hastily taking it; and yet he feared that he would sin by delaying it. "I feel," says he, "that there is great danger in beginning a church to the living God with hay and stubble; and still there is danger in delaying it too long, if the Spirit is giving a signal to go forward." He resolved, however, to "go forward." The intention to form a church was publicly announced, and those who wished to become members of it were requested to attend on the following evening. Mr. Griffiths had reason to hope that a goodly number would present themselves. He had noticed several manifesting deep feeling under his ministry. He had spoken with some personally, and had been led to entertain the most favourable opinion of them. When the appointed time came, he was not a little disconcerted to find only six in attendance, and among these there was scarcely one of the expected ones. He had great pleasure in conversing with two of these candidates; but that which was said by the others produced the opposite feeling. On the following week there was another society

meeting; and to his great sorrow, this proved a still greater failure than the first, for there were only two new candidates, while three of the first six were absent. Still he kept on, and matters came to wear a more hopeful aspect. In about five weeks "a most happy society was held at Immanuel Chapel." A woman of the name of Mary Guy came forward as a candidate for admission. "I was more pleased," he writes, "with her experience than with any whom I have hitherto met in this place. She appears to me to be a truly converted sinner. She related portions of the sermon that was blessed to her with much freedom and modesty, and without anything like ostentation. Her conduct for some months past has been that of a person fearing God. Blessed be the Lord for his unspeakable mercy to her and to me. When I came to this neighbourhood, she was strongly prejudiced against me; resolved that she would never come to hear me, and was afraid of sending her children to school, lest I should teach them some bad doctrines that would lead them to ruin. After a while, however, she sent her little girl; and it was to please this child that she accompanied her to hear me first of all. Soon afterwards she heard the sermon which was blessed to bring her to the dust as a guilty sinner before God." One such conquest affords ample reward for long and apparently fruitless toil. Our

brother had to rejoice over several; and the little beginning at Pilton Green promised to result in a flourishing, and for that neighbourhood, a numerous church.

But a storm was coming. It had in fact already commenced; and it ended in a complete rupture between Lady Barham and the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Connexion; and, as a necessary consequence, between her and her dear friend, Mr. Griffiths. We have no desire to recall the incidents of an old and extinct controversy for its own sake; but we are writing a memoir of the Rev. W. Griffiths, and do not, therefore, feel ourselves at liberty to pass over in silence any important part in the history of his life that tends to throw light upon his character.

Lady Barham had in her service a person of the name of William Hammerton. He appeared to be a pious man, and desired the office of a bishop. He had for some time preached in the different chapels in Gower, and had on some occasions gone out with Mr. Rees Jones to preach in other places beyond its boundaries. Her Ladyship had great confidence in him, and applied to the Calvinistic Methodist Association to have him ordained a minister of that Connexion. But it was, and is still, one of their standing rules that no one should be ordained until he has passed as a preacher through a probation of five years. They knew nothing

against Mr. Hammerton's private character, and they did not object to his preaching talents; but they could not break their rule. Lady Barham conscientiously believed that Mr. Hammerton was a chosen servant of Christ, and that he ought to be immediately ordained. They, on the other hand, felt in their consciences that they ought not to commit a breach of their own standing law; and the result was a complete rupture between her Ladyship and the Connexion. A number of Independent ministers consented to do that which the Calvinistic Methodist Association refused. The ordination took place at Lady Barham's own chapel, Bethesda. Perhaps it did not occur to these gentlemen that in ordaining a minister to *no* church—that in merely transforming a layman into a minister—they were acting in direct contravention of one of the fundamental principles of Congregationalism. The church at Newton, of which he afterwards took the charge, had refused to consent to his ordination; and the church assembling in the church in which he was ordained, had declared it as their opinion that it was better to wait. He had not therefore been called or chosen by any chapel; but these Independent brethren became Presbyterians for the occasion—constituted themselves into a Synod, and converted a lay brother into a minister.

From this time there was an evident change

in the carriage of Lady Barham towards Mr. Griffiths. There was not the same free confidence as before. He had interviews with her, but they were no longer "refreshing." He received notes from her on matters of business, but they were now merely business notes. Her Ladyship had changed her people; but he was still, and intended to continue a preacher with the Calvinistic Methodist Denomination. He attended their Monthly Meetings and Associations when practicable, and had done so from the beginning of his residence in Gower; but now, when he asked leave of absence to attend an Association at Llandilo, it was refused. He began to feel very unhappy in his position, and to entertain thoughts of leaving. The idea of quitting a field of labour which was beginning to wear such a promising aspect, was most distressing; but he had resolved to do so rather than become the minister of another Denomination. He corresponded with the Rev. D. Charles, Carmarthen, with the view of obtaining an appointment to a Home Missionary station in Radnorshire, and received encouraging replies. He wrote a letter of resignation, but did not send it. Several of his friends, and among them Mr. Kemp, who had taken the Theological Chair at Cheshunt College, wrote to him, entreating him not to forsake his post unless he was driven from it. But it was impossible to go on for any

length of time without coming to some decision. He had begun to receive members into the little society at Immanuel Chapel in November, 1821, and now the year 1822 was wearing out; but they had not yet received the Lord's Supper. Mr. Hammerton gave him a hint from her Ladyship "that it was time to go forward." Nothing could be more true, but *how* to go forward was the question. Who should administer the Lord's Supper among them the first time? Was the little society to be formed as a Calvinistic Methodist, or a Congregational Church? Under present circumstances Lady Barham could not consistently accede to the former, and Mr. Griffiths felt that he must renounce the brethren in whose communion he had begun his religious life, or place himself in a most anomalous position—become a member of an Independent church, while he continued to be a Calvinistic Methodist preacher—if he acceded to the latter. This was the difficulty; and it must be confessed that, with the best feelings on both sides, it was by no means easy to solve. Mr. Griffiths thought of a medium course. The Rev. Rees Jones was still minister of Lady Barham's chapel at Penclawdd. Let him come over to Immanuel Chapel, incorporate the church, and administer the sacrament to them the first time, and afterwards, until the time came when he should be himself ordained, let that service be supplied by the

minister at Bethesda, or any one else whom it might be most agreeable to send, or most convenient to obtain.

On this subject Mr. Griffiths wrote the following letter to her Ladyship:—

“MY DEAR LADY,—I write this line in the name of our little society at Immanuel, and in my own name, to know your Ladyship’s determination in regard to our having the sacrament here according to my proposal before. Your Ladyship then wished to have more time to consider the propriety of our having Mr. Rees Jones here to administer it. We wish still to have him, and think now that it is full time for us to begin, tho’ we proceed with trembling.

“I hope we shall show all deference and regard to your Ladyship’s decision, and trust that no discord shall come between us. I am willing to yield to any terms for the sake of peace, only not be forced to the Lord’s table with any damp or uneasiness on the mind, which I am fully persuaded your Ladyship will never insist upon. The outward forms of religion are only non-essentials, and only for a time; but the heart adorned with the spirit of meekness is before God of great price. I publicly declare that I have no party motive in view in this request, and am so far from thinking it will cause new divisions, that I believe it will be the means of a death-blow to those already in existence. However, I cannot find my mind easy to partake myself unless we have R. Jones here the first time. Perhaps this proceeds from my infirmity, but so it is—I speak the truth without any guile.

“I shall not enlarge, only wishing the unerring Spirit to guide your Ladyship in all you have to do.—I remain, my dear Lady, your most humble servant,

“WM. GRIFFITHS.”



The following was received from Lady Barham in reply:—

*"November 20th, 1822.*

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have considered and reconsidered and prayed over your proposal, and am more and more confirmed in my first decision that the resident minister *here* (Mr. Davies of Castle Villa) should form your church, and administer the ordinance the first time. I have no objection to Mr. R. Jones (whom I much value) in his turn.

"I conclude, as you are just returned from Pembroke-shire, that you know Mr. Davies will be here the day after to-morrow, and then if you wish it, he will go over when you like. I am very sorry to refuse you, but so it must be. I am very sorry you cannot be comfortable in communicating with them, but of course you must do as you see good, and may the Lord direct you in all your proceedings, is the sincere prayer of

"Your friend in our blessed Lord Jesus,

"BARHAM."

The above peremptory letter of her Ladyship elicited the following remonstrance from the church:—

*"November 27th, 1822.*

"HONOURED LADY,—We who sign our names are the members of the little society that meet in your chapel, Immanuel, Pilton Green. Two of our number are nominated to present this paper to your Ladyship in the name of the whole. We have lately thought of having the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in this place, tho' it was with many fears we formed that resolution, as we are but young in the service of the blessed Jesus. It was our dear and beloved teacher

we hoped would administer unto us that holy ordinance. It was thro' him we hope the Lord opened our eyes to see our lost condition, and enabled us to flee from the wrath to come. But when we put this question to him, he told us that he was not qualified to administer the sacrament. Then we and our minister together fixed upon Mr. Jones, Penclawdd, as the minister we were the best acquainted with, and also as we understood the oldest minister at present belonging to your Ladyship in Gower; and who we understood has administered in all your chapels. We desired our friend Mr. Griffiths to send our proposal in writing to your Ladyship, and your answer has been read in our private meeting, which says that your decision is 'that the resident minister who is to be shortly at Burry's Green (Mr. Davies of Castle Villa) is to come over and form our church, and give us the ordinance, that you are sorry to refuse our proposal, but *so it must be.*' We have been one week considering this answer, every one for himself, with deliberation and prayer, and have all met again without our teacher, that all may speak their mind freely, and that none might say we are influenced by him. In this meeting we have all agreed to send the following articles as the sentiments of our hearts.

"1. That we, as a little society, profess the highest respect to your Ladyship, and are not insensible of the great blessing the Lord has bestowed upon us thro' your bounty, for which we wish to show every sentiment of your gratitude as long as we live.

"2. That we have no wish to dispute your Ladyship's right to send what minister you think proper to your own chapels.

"3. As your Ladyship is the whole support of the cause in your own chapels, we think every member

that enjoys this privilege is bound by the gospel to look up to your worthy person with every mark of respect, and that nothing should be carried forward without consulting your Ladyship, and acquainting you with the views and feelings of the whole people.

"4. That we don't wish to lay too much stress upon having one minister before another, as if none but one particular person would do for us; we hate that narrow spirit.

"5. But we are under the necessity of objecting to this decision of your Ladyship, as infringing on the rights of conscience, and (according to our views) taking away the liberty Christ has granted to His whole church. We thought we had a voice for ourselves in a thing that is entirely belonging to our own spiritual concern, according to Matt. xviii. 18, 19, 20, and Matt. xx. 25, 26. 27. According to your Ladyship, all this liberty is entirely taken away from us. It was never asked us whether we would consent to this decision, but *that it must be so*, and our own proposal is rejected, without any reason for it only your Ladyship had determined it otherwise.

"We acknowledge we are but babes; but to impose on our ignorance we think worse than if we knew more. An opposite party has reproached us from the beginning by saying 'that the common people in Lady Barham's Connexion were not allowed the liberty to judge for themselves, and that we should see that some time or other.' We always looked upon that as the voice of malice; but now we are very sorry that we are forced to believe it. If we are rejected in a thing so small, and that the very first petition, we cannot expect to have any voice in things of more importance.

"Therefore, honored Lady, with all respect we beg

leave to say, we can come no farther upon this ground; but have all agreed to stay as we are till we shall farther see what the Lord will do for us, and must be ever your well-wishers in the Lord.

"For fear that we have erred, we keep a copy of this letter, and shall willingly call back our sentiments when convinced of our mistake.

"We beg leave to remain, dear Lady,

"Your children in the Lord,

"JOHN EDWARD,	RUTH STOTE,
JOHN CHALK,	MARTHA WILKIN,
JOHN ACE,	ELEANOR GAMMON,
GEO. BEVAN,	ELEANOR ACE,
THOMAS MORGAN,	ELIZ. MORGAN,
ELIZABETH DAVIES,	AGNES BEVAN."
MARY GUY,	

P.S.—As our dear minister has been represented and spoken of more than once as a man of a narrow spirit, turning the people of Gower to his views, we beg once more to say, that what we have written is our own sentiments; and nothing but a sense of duty would have urged us to say so much. In regard to our teacher turning us to his views, we can set our witness to the contrary. He declared publicly in our society eight months ago, when the question was put to him about a change we heard had taken place at Burry's Green that he would not aim to turn one of us to his party; and has now again declared, that before he can suffer to see any disturbance, he will yield up his place, and leave Gower. But many scores and some hundreds on this side have made up their minds, before we will lose him half of the last morsel we have shall go before we suffer him to leave Gower. Tho' we know that he never admires such things, yet we cannot help expressing our feelings."

This brought matters to a crisis. Instead of in any way yielding to the wishes of the people, Lady Barham directed Mr. Hammerton, whom she had made trustee of her chapels, to send the following notices:—

“To Mr. Wm. Griffiths,

“Immanuel Chapel, Pilton Green.

“*Fairy Hill, December 4th, 1822.*

“DEAR BROTHER,—Lady Barham has laid before me your letter wherein you refuse to receive the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper from the minister at Bethesda Chapel. And also her Ladyship has laid before me the letter sent in the names of the members of the Society at Immanuel Chapel; and it is her Ladyship’s desire that I should write both to you and the members of Immanuel,—her Ladyship having appointed me as the acting trustee for the whole of her chapels.

“I am authorized to say (which I know to be truth) that her Ladyship does not wish to infringe on the liberty of your conscience, nor of the members of Immanuel Chapel; but that you have a just right to judge for yourselves, and her Ladyship wishes you so to do. But on the other hand her Ladyship has a just right to establish what church discipline and laws in her chapel she thinks best, *provided it be consistent with the word of God.*

“It is her Ladyship’s final decision that when a church is formed at Immanuel, it shall be on the same basis as Bethesda; and as you and your members cannot conform conscientiously to such a mode of procedure, and as they hold out a threat in their letter to keep you in Gower, I must say that we cannot have the least objection, as we are fully persuaded that there is plenty of work for several more labourers in Gower.

I only hope all will be done in the spirit of the gospel. Therefore this day three months another minister and schoolmaster will be sent to Immanuel Chapel, to fill your situation. Wishing you every guidance and blessing, I remain, dear brother,

"Yours in the gospel of Christ,

"WM. HAMMERTON."

"To the Members of the Society Meeting in  
Immanuel Chapel."

"*Fairy Hill, 4th December, 1822.*

"DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE LORD,—Lady Barham having appointed me as the acting trustee for the whole of her chapels, her Ladyship wishes me to answer your letter relative to the administration of the Lord's Supper among you as a small society worshipping God in Immanuel Chapel; and as you object to the minister at Bethesda Chapel, and insinuate that Lady Barham wishes to lord it over your consciences, I beg to say that you are under a very great mistake. Lady Barham wishes no such a thing, but that you should each one judge for yourselves, and act accordingly; and on the other hand her Ladyship has a justifiable right to act as she pleases with and in her own chapels, *provided all she does is consistent with the word of God*; and it is her Ladyship's final determination that when a church is formed at Immanuel Chapel, *it shall be one of the same basis as Bethesda Chapel*. Therefore, as you and Mr. Griffiths cannot conscientiously conform to such a mode of procedure; and as you intend to keep Mr. Griffiths in Gower, we can only wish and pray every blessing to attend your efforts, and I sincerely hope that you will be actuated by the spirit of the gospel, and make the Bible your rule in all things.

"I have wrote to Mr. Griffiths to say that this day three months another minister and schoolmaster will be sent to Immanuel Chapel to fill up his situation.— I remain, dear brethren and sisters, your sincere well-wisher in the blessed gospel of Christ,

"WM. HAMMERTON."

The Sabbath after these notices were received, he preached as usual at Immanuel Chapel morning and evening. "I had much help," he writes, "in the morning. The people also were very much affected, and many were in tears. The news of my removal has spread through the neighbourhood, and has roused the feelings of all. O that the Lord may overrule this painful event to bring some souls home to Christ. And that I may be enabled, if spared during these three months, to be more in earnest than ever! In the afternoon I attended the school, and my feelings were greatly moved when I saw the dear little children weeping at the thoughts of my departure. O, what is to come of all this? The Lord is infinitely wise, infinitely good, and almighty in power; therefore all shall be well in the end."

The three months' notice expired March 4th, 1823. The preceding Sabbath was his last at Pilton Green; and he then preached his farewell sermon, at the close of which he delivered "in substance" the following address:—

"Now you expect me to say something more immediately as it regards the present event. But what shall I say? It is very probable that this will be the last time I shall ever address you from this pulpit. This providence has two voices, one for you and one for myself. It calls upon me to enquire, how have I acted during the time I have had the privilege of standing up in this place? how faithful or unfaithful have I been in warning the ungodly and profane? how tender-hearted towards the contrite soul in pointing him to the Lamb of God? how have I handled the word of truth and applied its contents (according to my poor ability) to the several states and capacities of my hearers? It calls upon me also to examine myself. What have I done to provoke the Lord to be angry with me, in suffering this to come upon me? He never uses the rod without need; and may this humble me in dust and ashes. There is a voice also for you in this providence. How have you heard the word, carelessly or attentively? How have you acted after you heard? Has the gospel followed you to your house? what is there that was not before? and what was before that is not now? What will the scores and even hundreds of sermons you have heard from this pulpit be unto you in the day of judgment, a savour of life or of death?

"In regard to my dismissal, I wish to say but very little. It would appear very imprudent in me to defend my own character before you. The whole of Gower has seen and known me for six years in my private life, and my public ministry, therefore I must submit that to the public at large. The reason why I lose my place is as well known in public as I know it myself, therefore I shall not say anything for or against myself.

"I know that many will say I might have kept my place had it not been my own fault. To this I only



reply, it is one of the most painful things I ever met with to give up my station; and could I keep it, and keep my conscience in peace, no one should take it from me. But when I think of death and judgment, I feel no remorse on account of anything that has passed between me and my superiors. Whatever the world or professors may say is of no consequence to me. The Lord is my Judge, and by him all actions are weighed.

“Some of you would probably ask me, What are you going to do in future? To this I answer that I have for three months been praying to the Lord to guide me, and consulting all the pious people of my acquaintance, as far as I was able, in Gower and out of it, and have about a week ago come to the determination to stay in Gower for the present. I publicly declare, and hope I shall prove it by my conduct, that I am not remaining to oppose my Honorable Patroness. I wish to cherish a spirit of love and candour towards her and her ministers. Neither do I wish to oppose other parties in any way whatever. But I will give my reasons for staying.

“1. I trust the Lord has given me some souls in Gower with whom I hope thro’ mercy to spend a happy eternity in the presence of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, and I cannot willingly leave them.

“2. The whole of the people of Gower in general have sent to me from different sides of the country wishing me to stay and continue my labours among them.

“3. The attachment I feel to the country, and particularly to the little children who have been under my care, gives me some encouragement to hope that the Lord will yet bless my poor labours in this district for the good of souls and the glory of his great name.

“4. The leadings of Providence appear to me more satisfactory to stop than to go away, when I consider

the manner in which I first came here; and the different movements in Gower since I came, all which I trust in some small measure the Lord ordered for good, tho' often contrary to my feelings. Perhaps some of you would ask one question more: How I expect to be supported? To this few words shall suffice. I am satisfied, if the Lord has a work for me to do, he will not suffer me to want; and if I shall be in want, then I shall conclude that the Lord perhaps calls me somewhere else.

"Therefore, my dear friends, I wish you farewell from this pulpit. May the Lord bless and prosper the next minister that will occupy it, and be with us where and whenever we meet to worship his Holy Name in Christ! Amen."

Referring to this day's proceedings he writes in his journal: "A trying day to my feelings. I preached morning and evening at Immanuel; and that *for the last time*. I cannot say how I felt. Many tears were shed, and there was much sobbing through the congregation. May the Lord support and strengthen us for the future! O that I may have nothing in view but the glory of God, and the good of souls!"

The following Tuesday was the day of parting with his school, and that painful scene is thus described by himself:—"This trying day is now over. I do not remember that I ever experienced such feelings before. I kept school till middle day, and then dismissed the children, as the other school-master did not come to take it off my hands. The piercing cries of the dear little

children when they stood up to go away so overpowered my feelings, that I was not able to speak a word, and had nothing to do but withdraw and leave them. I heard their cries at a long distance from the chapel. I thought I would suffer any hardship that I might remain with them, and keep my place in the chapel; but all that is over now. I do not, however, feel any remorse, and am persuaded that I have done that which is right in refusing to comply with that which was required of me. Should the offer be made me again, I would again refuse it." That evening Mr. Hammerton called on him to pay his last quarter's salary, and never alluded to his dismissal, nor asked what he intended to do, but "appeared as cheerful as ever."

The entry for that momentous day concludes in the following remarkable words:—"I must make up my mind to remain in Gower. I cannot leave the work which I have begun, nor quit the field, because others will not allow me to join them. *O Lord, send now prosperity.*"

## CHAPTER VII.

Providence—new arrangement—death of Lady Barham—house taken at Overton—chapel purchased at Old Walls—a sacrament Sabbath—ordination—an offer from Lord Barham—acceptance of the same—settlement at Burry Green.

WE never knew a more firm believer in a particular Providence than our dear friend, Mr. Griffiths. “Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?” “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” These texts, and such as these, were to him a reality, and he believed them as intensely as he did that other text which says, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish; but have everlasting life.” He acknowledged the hand of God in the minutest affairs of this life as well as in the mightiest matters of the life that is to come. On one Sunday evening, during his residence at Penclawdd, the servant belonging to the house at which he lodged was very forcibly impressed during the service that all was not right at home. All the family were in chapel, and she being the last to leave the house, had left everything quite

safe. Still she could not rest. She therefore left the child she had in her arms to the charge of a neighbour, and hastened home to see whether there was any ground for her apprehensions; and sure enough there was, for she found a thief had entered the house, and was in the act of packing up some valuables to carry away. This event, which many would regard as merely a strange coincidence, is put down by him in his diary as "a very remarkable interposition of Providence," and "undoubtedly a miracle."

About a month after his marriage, he and Mrs. Griffiths rode to Swansea, intending to return the next day. But the entry in his journal for that morning begins with that oft repeated expression, "Man is born to sorrow." The horses on which they had ridden to town had strayed during the night, and the minutest search had resulted in a failure to discover their whereabouts. That which made matters still worse was, that they were "borrowed." This led him to reflect. "I began to think," he writes, "of my careless conduct before the Lord for weeks past, and felt that it was just in him to give me some severe pain to bring me to myself and to Him." He must return home that evening, for the morrow was the Sabbath. It was by no means a pleasant Sabbath to him, for he could not forget the lost animals; though in the evening at Old Walls he "was enabled to some extent

to forget all the pain and trouble of this world." On arriving at Swansea on Monday morning, he found to his comfort that one of the missing beasts "had returned of its own accord to the field from which he had strayed; and before Mr. G. left the town, the other followed its companion's example, with this difference, that it came to the yard in which those who looked for it were standing at the time. "It came into the yard," Mr. G. writes, "before our eyes, and while we were talking about it. This singular providence made a deep impression on my mind, as well as on the mind of my friend John Mack, the owner of one of the animals. Even by the smallest of our earthly affairs the Lord can teach us spiritual wisdom, and show his own power and goodness. I felt thankful, and endeavoured to bless his name all the way home." We make no apology for this seeming digression. It was not considered beneath the dignity of inspiration to relate how Saul was led into the possession of a throne by the straying of his father's asses. We do not feel, therefore, that we have in the least transgressed in relating how a much better man was led to self-examination and gratitude, by the loss and recovery of nobler animals. Nor is it a digression at all. We are speaking of Mr. Griffiths's faith in Providence. That faith was unbounded. He lived in close fellowship with the supernatural. In taking leave of his

people, he alluded to Elijah's being fed by ravens; and we are fully persuaded if he had been in want of food, and if two ravens had entered the house with bread and meat, and had laid it on the table before him, that he would not at all have been astonished. He would have only regarded it as another example of God's care for his people.

Now he must depend upon Providence. All extraneous aid had been withdrawn. Mr. Hamerton had paid him his last quarter's salary, and he had no longer any source from which to expect the means of subsistence, but the free contributions of the people among whom he laboured. They were for the most part in very humble circumstances; and so far they had not been used to contribute towards the support of the gospel. They had been earnestly called to repentance; they had been urged to pray and to live godly; but as yet they had not been required to give. Lady Barham had presented them with a free gospel. All that they had to do was to enjoy its privileges, leaving her Ladyship to bear the expense of its support. We believe that we are right in saying that people are less disposed to exercise liberality than any other Christian grace when there is no urgent necessity for it; and even where such necessity exists, it is generally the least flourishing of all the graces. It was so emphatically in Gower. Numbers of the people had been converted to believe the gospel,

but they required a new conversion to induce them to contribute towards its support. This with many of them was a difficult matter. We heard Mr. Griffiths relate an anecdote which is quite characteristic of some of his hearers at that time. A man whom he had observed to be a regular attendant for some time came to him one day, and said that he had something on his mind to ask him. Upon being requested to state the important matter, he said, "I have been hearing your sermons every Sunday for a long time; dont you think you ought to *pay me* something?" Long after that we heard that a well-to-do individual intended to withdraw his quarterly subscription from one minister, and give it to another. We believe that the *first* part of the intention was duly fulfilled, and the amount of the subscription was *sixpence* per quarter. There has been some improvement in Gower since that time; but yet there is room for more. We take a liberty in speaking of the good people there which we would not allow in many, for we love them exceedingly, and for that reason we hope that as they abound in almost every good work, they will no longer be backward in this grace also.

Under the circumstances which we have attempted to describe, the step which Mr. Griffiths took was attended with no little risk, but he took it trusting in God. He was not disappointed.



Though the sums he received were very small, he was not suffered to want food and raiment. He set to work earnestly and at once. The day after leaving the school, we find him travelling up and down Gower to make arrangements for future services. The following Sabbath he preached in the morning at Llanrhidian, and in the evening at Horton. The distance between these two places is about six miles. In the evening there was a very crowded attendance, and throughout the day he had evident tokens of the Lord's gracious presence. Next day we have the following entry:—"Wet day; at home reading, &c. In the evening we had the first society out of the chapel at John Ace's house. All the friends attended except one, though the evening was very wet. We had a very comfortable time; had reason to believe that the Lord was present, and if He condescends to be with us, it will make up for every loss." The following evening he preached "at Pitton, where the house was crowded to excess, which made it rather uncomfortable; but," he adds, "the Lord was with us." On Wednesday evening, he preached at Nicholastone; Thursday evening at Burrows Chapel, Swansea; and on Friday he returned to Landimore, in Gower, where he preached in the evening, and where the Lord gave him "much freedom." Saturday, he "remained in-doors, and applied to study." It

is thus that the first week after his dismissal was spent; and it is only an example of many succeeding weeks in his long and laborious life. But it was necessary to organize; and on the Wednesday following the week the labours of which we have above described, we find him engaged in the work of organization. His dear friend, Wm. Voss, Esq. of Nicholastone, then in the vigour of youth, was of great assistance to him at this important juncture. No one who knew Mr. Voss need be told that he was a friend indeed. He had no idea of half-heartedness, and we are sure that he never understood the meaning of the word to the day of his death. He served the Lord with all his heart and soul. His friendship was warm, ardent, and thoroughly sincere. It was at his house the first "general society" was held "to form the new cause in Gower." The names of all the members in the different parts of the peninsula were entered, and they were found to be thirty-seven in number.

In less than three weeks after this, Lady Barham was removed to her rest. Notwithstanding the events which had recently happened, Mr. Griffiths entertained a deep and sincere respect for her Ladyship. He believed that she had been led into a mistake, but he likewise believed that she had acted conscientiously in what she had done. She brought the blessings of the gospel into a dark and long neglected district,

where there are now six chapels standing as monuments of her Christian liberality; and there are many souls now in glory who were led by her means to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There was at Old Walls, near Llanrhidian, a chapel which had been built by the Wesleyan Methodists some ten years before this time, but which had fallen into a very dilapidated state in consequence of having long gone out of use. The people who raised it had left the neighbourhood, and had given it up to the owner of the ground on which it was built. This place was taken for a period of twenty-five years, for £20 down, and £1 per annum rent; Mr. Griffiths and his friends taking the repairs upon themselves. On the day that this bargain was made, Mr. Griffiths says in his journal, "I feel very happy that we have one place of worship in Gower. Thus far the Lord has provided. O for a grateful heart!" He had previously preached at this chapel on Sunday evening, and the congregation was so large that "scores were obliged to stand outside." Since then a new lease has been kindly granted on these premises by the kindness of T. Gordon, Esq., of Llwyn-ybwch; and the chapel has been enlarged and much improved.

In the village of Overton, on the other side of the country, and not far from Pilton Green, a

house was taken for religious worship. It was opened for that purpose on Friday, July 4th, 1823; and on the following day we find the following entry:—"The Lord seems to smile upon us in his providence every week."

But it was not altogether smooth water. At one time we find him grieved in spirit in consequence of having to expel two females who had quarrelled with each other; and fearing that in consequence of being allowed to go on for too long a time, some of the mischief had spread to other members of the church. Another time he mourns over the small number of conversions among his hearers. Numbers continued to attend the means, but they were for the most part indifferent to, and forgetful of their own personal interest in the truths to which they listened. Besides all this, temporal matters were not very promising. It is true that the necessities of each day were supplied; but the children of men cannot help looking forward, and the prospect that opened before him at this time was anything but encouraging. Still he was enabled to live and to labour. Not a week passed without his having received help and encouragement in some of its numerous services, and the great work was steadily though slowly going forward.

July 27th, 1823, was a great Sabbath in Gower. It was then that the church under Mr. G.'s care first received together the ordinance of the

Lord's Supper. The officiating minister was the Rev. D. Charles of Carmarthen. That great and good man came over to assist and encourage his young friend. The morning service was held at Old Walls Chapel. It was here that they sat together at the Lord's table; and they found a feast indeed. Mr. Charles preached again at Overton in the afternoon, and at Horton in the evening. It was a comfort to Mr. G. to be thus owned and encouraged by one of the foremost men in the Denomination to which he belonged; and a greater comfort still that when he came there were unmistakeable evidences of the presence of his Lord and Master.

Not having been ordained himself, he was obliged to depend upon the aid of brethren from a distance; and we are inclined to think that during this period the sacrament Sabbaths were of very unfrequent occurrence. On the 18th of January, 1824, the Rev. Thomas Jones of Carmarthen preached and administered the ordinance at Overton; and "all the members in Gower except one were present." Mr. Griffiths puts this day down as "a sweet season of refreshing to most of those present," and felt thankful to the Lord for permitting them once more to join in that spiritual feast in commemoration of his dying love.

The following August, at the Annual Association at Llangeitho, the only place in South Wales

where at this time Calvinistic Methodist orders were conferred, he was ordained, in company with the Revds. D. Howells, Swansea, and Morgan Howells of Newport. He was the senior preacher of the three. It was some time after he had come to Gower the first began his ministry, and it was before him at Greenhill Chapel on a Sunday afternoon that he had preached his first sermon. The second we believe was a younger preacher still. At any rate, Mr. Griffiths, having heard him preach some time before they met to be ordained together, "was very much humbled and ashamed because this young man who had begun to preach long after" him "was able to preach so much better."

It is a notable fact that of all who took any part in this ordination, there only remains one in the land of the living. Those who conducted the solemnity, and those who were the subjects of it, are all gone except one. The address on the nature of the Christian church was delivered by the Rev. Thomas Richards. The weighty and soul-stirring charge was delivered by Ebenezer Morris. Other portions of the service were conducted by the Revds. J. Roberts, Llangwm; Robt. Griffiths, Dolgellau; Richd. Lloyd, Beaumaris; and J. Jones, Holywell. These are all gone to their rest; and the Revds. Morgan Howells and Wm. Griffiths, two of the ordained, have followed them there. The only survivor of

the whole company is our dear friend, the Rev. D. Howells of Swansea. He, although beginning to verge on old age, is still healthy and strong, and able vigourously to work in the service of his Master. May the Lord long spare his useful life!

This step removed some of the difficulties and inconveniences under which Mr. Griffiths had long laboured; but in the present life one thing is always set over against the other. Any joy which he may have felt at being thus recognized by his brethren, and qualified to discharge all the functions of the ministry, was considerably modified by the fact that his temporal prospects in Gower were now beginning to darken. "I have had," he says, "some painful feelings with reference to the cause of Christ in Gower, though there are not wanting some evidences of God's providential care for me and for his cause. One friend, who is our principal supporter, is about to leave the country; and though he intends to continue his subscription, I am greatly grieved at the prospect of his leaving us. It is he that has so far managed our outward affairs, and his house has been the only home we could always depend upon for the entertainment of those brethren who came to visit us from a distance. Another of our members has, I am afraid, gone  
 'tative to Babylon. He has, without any ap-  
 it cause, absented himself from our society

for many weeks together. Most of our non-professing subscribers are likewise about to withdraw their support. All this is distressing to the mind, when one looks at it as man looketh; but I am persuaded that if I could only rise by faith above the creature, and view the promise of God in Christ, all would be calm. The God of Bethel is the God of Padanaram. He will not suffer any to hurt his own. He may permit thousands of afflictions, and send more if need be to purge away their dross, to wean them from earthly objects, to shake them off from all earthly dependencies, that they may put their trust in Him alone. My only want is the want of faith. O how slow of heart I am to believe! Surely, in due time we shall reap, if we faint not. Surely the Lord has not forsaken us."

But there were coming events which even now were beginning to cast their shadows before them. Though, as we have already seen, the management of Lady Barham's chapels had been given into the hands of Mr. Hammerton, Bethesda Chapel, with its out-station Trinity, was under the control of her Ladyship's eldest son, the Right Honourable Lord Barham. This pious nobleman had heard that the places of worship which his honoured parent had reared were almost deserted, while the people for whose benefit they were intended crowded to dwelling-houses to hear Mr. Griffiths. He therefore thought that



since Mr. G. had the people, it would be better for him likewise to have the chapels that were at his Lordship's disposal. He wrote to the Rev. D. Charles on the subject, and gave some hints respecting his views and intentions in other quarters. Indefinite rumours of a coming change were from time to time reaching Gower, and were greatly agitating our friend's mind. These rumours assumed a definite shape on the 27th of November, 1824, when Mr. Griffiths received the following letter:—

*"Barham Court, near Maidstone, Kent,  
"November 20, 1824.*

"DEAR SIR,—Several considerations induce me to offer you to succeed Mr. Davies as minister at Bethesda, with the salary of fifty pounds a-year.

"I am induced to hope that your ministry among the people will be blest, and be the means of uniting the members that are now scattered. I trust you will make this offer a subject of much consideration and prayer, and I should wish you to let me have your answer in three or four days after you receive this letter at farthest.

"Of course you would look to me for salary, and not consider yourself as particularly connected with the other chapels.

"I remain, dear sir,

"Yours sincerely,

"BARHAM."

Two days later he wrote to his Lordship, provisionally accepting his kind and liberal offer; but stating that he did not feel at liberty to enter

into a permanent engagement until he had consulted his brethren at the Association, and had obtained their consent. The subject was therefore brought before the Association which met at Swansea on the 28th December, and the result of the deliberations of the brethren there was communicated to Mr. Griffiths in the following letter:—

“DEAR BROTHER,—The Brethren, Ministers, and Elders, in the Welsh Calvinistic Connexion assembled at their Quarterly Association in the Town of Swansea, on the 28th and 29th days of Dec., 1824, having taken into consideration the subject you proposed to them; namely, an application made to you by the Right. Hon. Lord Barham to supply as a minister certain chapels in Gower, deem it proper to communicate to you the result of their deliberations. Tho’ it be not a usual course with the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists to continue their ministry where Societies or Churches are formed, without securing the places of worship to the Connexion by proper legal instruments, yet, contemplating all the circumstances peculiar to the cause of Christ formed by the ministry of the gospel under the auspices of the late Lady Barham in Gower, they do not advise you to reject the fore-mentioned application; but judge it expedient that you should understand the general grounds upon which the Connexion consent to the exercise of your ministry in the Chapels of the Right Hon. Lord Barham.

“1. That you as a member of the Methodists’ Connexion remain accountable to that Connexion, as all its ministers and members are.

“2. That your ministry shall extend into the Con-

nexion as much as may be possible, consistently with affording ample supply to the places entrusted to your care.

"3. That the form and manner of performing the service of God and administering the ordinances of the gospel, shall assimilate as nearly as practicable to that adopted by the Welsh Methodists.

"4. That the chapels supplied by you shall be open to the ministry of the ministers in the Welsh Methodists' Connexion at all times, but without occasioning any expense to his Lordship.

"5. That the doctrine preached in these chapels shall accord with the *Confession of Faith* published by the Methodists' Connexion, and the discipline exercised shall be in unison with the Rules annexed thereto.

"6. That in case it should occur at any future period that a departure from the doctrine contained in the fore-mentioned publication should appear, or should there exist a defect in the exercise of due discipline according to such established Rules, then in such a case the Welsh Methodist Connexion will consider it their duty to judge of the propriety of your remaining a minister of these chapels.

"The above Resolutions you are desired to convey to his Lordship, and also the most respectful Christian regards of the Welsh Methodists' Body, with the great satisfaction they feel in knowing that their feeble efforts in the gospel of peace have obtained the notice and approbation of his Lordship.

"E. RICHARDS, Sec."

"Jan. 5, 1825.

Great was the joy of the people of Gower upon being permitted with their beloved pastor to take possession of Bethesda Chapel as, well as its

little appendage, Trinity. Mr. Griffiths had continued to preach occasionally in the latter, up to the time of his dismissal from Immanuel Chapel; and a few days before that event took place he had preached there his "farewell sermon" from the words, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us;" and now, when he again entered the little place after an absence of nearly two years, he took for his text the same motto, "*Hitherto* hath the Lord helped us."

Still there followed a season of anxious suspense. The appointment, as we have seen, was only provisional. Whether it should be rendered permanent or not depended upon Lord Barham's approval of the resolutions of the Association which had been duly forwarded to him by Mr. Griffiths. His Lordship was some time before sending his reply, and while waiting for it our dear friend's mind became very uneasy. On the 30th of January, he writes: "My spirits are very low, and one cause of this depression is my disappointment at not receiving an answer from Lord Barham. O how weak is my faith! How many mountains I raise without need! I have written nothing to his Lordship but what was necessary, accompanied by the answer of the Connexion; yet my mind is commenting upon every sentence as offensive, because there are three weeks since I sent my letter, and no reply has hitherto come. Then I say, How mean I shall appear in the eyes

of men, if I must leave this chapel after having the offer of it, removing to it, and beginning my ministry in it! How will my enemies rejoice; and many such things! Away with you all unbelieving fears, proud, selfish, carnal reasonings. Is it not God that opened this door? Was it ever expected by me? Did I do anything right or wrong towards obtaining it? And if God brought me here, cannot he keep me here? Or has he no right, if he thinks fit, to shut the same door at his own will? But O wicked heart, that refuses to submit to bear the cross. Yet the Lord can and will make me willing to give up all to him."

His fears were all groundless. The interval had been occupied by his Lordship in making sundry enquiries, the results of which proved satisfactory; and on the 9th of February all Mr. G.'s suspense was brought to an end by the receipt of the following letter:—

*Barham Court, Feb. 1, 1825.*

"DEAR SIR,—In answer to the resolutions of the committee of the Welsh Methodists, I beg you to assure them from me that I am gratified by the manner in which they express their approbation of you, and willingness that you should exercise your ministry in Bethesda Chapel.

"Yours sincerely,

"BARHAM."

## CHAPTER VIII.

Bethesda—early thoughts of matrimony—birth of his son—parental care—birthday-day letters.

BETHESDA is a lovely place, situated in a lovely spot. It is a well-built chapel, with an equally well-built house adjoining it, looking across a patch of common known by the name of Burry's Green, over a slightly undulating country of about four miles in extent. On the right stand Llanmadock Hill and Rhosilly. Down on the left is the Cefn-y-bryn mountain, and just behind it is the deep, narrow, and beautiful Cheriton Valley, through which the little river Burry runs into the estuary that is called after its name.

From the day on which Mr. Griffiths had left his parents' roof, when he was fourteen years of age, until the time of his settlement at Bethesda, he had been without a home. Five years he lived with the farmers of the neighbourhood of his nativity. For five years more he was billeted in public houses at Devonport, Bristol, Newcastle, &c. For two years he was a lodger at his brother's house at Ffoesfantach, and while he laboured at Trinity, and afterwards at Immanuel Chapel, he had lived in lodgings. Now, however, he has found a home. He is no more a lodger, but lives in a house of his own, and a most comfortable house it is. There are six

apartments through which he can roam at pleasure. Standing at either of his front windows, he may at any time enjoy a wide and lovely prospect. There is in front a nice green enclosure; and there are behind a garden, a coach-yard, and stable. He has only four steps from his own door to that of the chapel; and that distance is covered by a verandah supported by trellis-work. Besides it all, he is now in receipt of a stated salary, which, although not appearing great at the present day, is affluence itself compared with the pittance on which he has hitherto been obliged to subsist. But after all, he is not happy. There is still one important deficiency. The first man with paradise for a residence, and the world for an empire, very soon discovered that something more was necessary to make his happiness complete; for among all the creatures that obeyed his call and ministered to his wants and comfort, he could not find a help meet for him.

Mr. Griffiths was now in his thirty-sixth year. Most of those who enter the marriage state at all enter it long before attaining that age. He had not spent his years without some serious thoughts of matrimony. As early as 1815 his mind was seriously occupied with this subject; and we have an entry in his diary to the fact that, on the 4th November in that year, he made it a special subject of prayer. "I asked the Lord,"

he says, "for His guidance in this most important matter." Early in the following year there is reference to the same subject, though he had "no one in view," nor had he "spoken a word about it to any one but the Lord." Sometime after he had settled at Trinity, he became acquainted with a young lady whom he thought he would like as a partner; and on the 2nd of July, 1817, he addressed her a letter, making proposals of marriage. After he had written this letter, and before he sent it, he poured forth his heart before the Lord in the following prayer:—"O Lord, help me to act in thy fear, and guide me in the way that will be most for thy glory, my own happiness, and the good of souls. O grant these requests for Christ's sake. Amen." A few days later, however, he discovered, to his great consternation, that one of his bosom friends had just at the same time made similar proposals to the object of his choice. When the two friends met, and discovered what had taken place, they at once determined that the affair should not occasion any coldness between them. The young lady was left to decide for herself; her choice fell on the friend, and thus the matter terminated.

In the autumn of 1825 his attention was directed to Miss A. G. Jones of Talley, in Carmarthenshire. He had but slight personal acquaintance with the lady; but had heard much



in her praise. He accordingly determined to write to her; and the reply which he received a few weeks afterwards, "though not decidedly in the affirmative," was quite gratifying to his mind, and gave him ground to hope that the correspondence would end in matrimony. "I hope," he adds, "that the Spirit of the Lord will guide me every step, and that the issue, whatever it may be, may prove to the glory of God, the good of his people, and of my own soul." He was not mistaken as to the issue of the correspondence. A few months' intercourse made it quite evident that Providence had intended these two for one another; and on the 19th of July, 1826, they were united together in the holy bonds of matrimony; and we can fearlessly declare that a happier union was never contracted.

Perhaps the rule which forbids speaking much in laudation of the living is, upon the whole, a good one; but really one finds it sometimes exceedingly inconvenient, and sadly interfering with his inclinations. Had there been no conventional restraints in this matter—had one been at liberty to say all that he knows and feels disposed to say; we would this very moment summon up our best abilities, and address ourselves to the pleasing task of placing before our readers some of the excellent qualities of Mrs. Griffiths. We would speak of her as a wife and as a mother. We would describe her as the pastor's helpmate,

and as the Christian friend and adviser. We would say how she took care that her husband should not be burdened with the concerns of the present life, that he might devote himself entirely to the work of Him who had called him to be a soldier. We would speak of the diligence with which she removed from his path every hindrance to the discharge of his duties. We would speak of her punctuality, economy, and domestic management; how she had mastered the art of securing comfort and elegance without being extravagant; how some gentlemen who knew her best proposed that every intended bride should spend two months' apprenticeship with Mrs. Griffiths previous to her marriage, to prepare herself for domestic management. We would speak of the intelligent and delicate tact with which she would correct a fault without seeming to know it. We would say how she made every visitor feel completely at home, and entertain him with intelligent and Christian conversation. But we are met by the rule, We must not praise the living. We are afraid that we have broken it already. Be it so; we shall transgress no more. The husband of a virtuous wife is, however, permitted to praise her by the word of inspiration. Our readers therefore shall have Mr. Griffiths's own words, penned after a marriage life of upwards of thirty years. "When I first saw her at her home, the Lord gave me a happy

assurance by impressing on my mind the words of Abraham's servant: 'I bowed down my head and worshipped the Lord, and blessed the Lord God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way.' The words 'who had led me in the right way' continued fresh in my mind for weeks together, and the *truth of them in my case I firmly believe to this very hour*. The Lord gave me a help meet for both worlds, and a great assistance to prosecute my ministry without let or distraction. I am therefore under the more obligation faithfully to serve him and his cause."

He was now in the enjoyment of domestic comforts and happiness which he had never previously known; and his only fear was lest "this change so pleasing and grateful should lead him astray from the Lord even more than if it had been some heavy cross." "O Lord," he adds, "enable me to live daily in thy presence."

On the 22nd of January, 1828, his only child was born. His feelings on this interesting occasion will be better expressed in his own words. "This has been to us a remarkable day, as it gave birth to my first-born child. I and my dear partner have great reason to bless and praise God for his mercy. Soon after the child's birth was announced, I retired to my room, and endeavoured to *give him to the Lord*, begging that he would graciously condescend to *take him*,

*body and soul*, for time and eternity in the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, that he might be washed in his precious blood, and made partaker of the divine nature; and that, if it should please him that this dear little babe should live and grow up to maturity, he might be made a living stone in the Lord's temple, and a comfort to his church and people in his days. I felt considerable enlargement of heart in praying for him. May the Lord in mercy hear and answer these poor petitions, which I trust have been offered up in sincerity. Perhaps thou, my dear child, shalt see these lines when I shall be numbered among the dead. May the Lord bless them to put thee in mind of thy father's and mother's anxiety for thy salvation. Thou art to be called William Griffiths; and we hope, as soon as convenient, to dedicate thee to the Lord in the holy ordinance of baptism, as an outward and visible sign of that grace which we hope the Lord will be pleased to implant in thy heart."

This early dedication of his child unto God was well sustained by constant watchfulness over his spiritual interests.

September 3, 1836, he writes: "Three things press upon my heart in prayer—my own growth in grace and usefulness—the prosperity of the church in which I labour—and the salvation of my little family. I have no doubt respecting the safe state of my dear wife. Our servant also

makes a profession, and is hitherto outwardly consistent. But my dear little boy, now gone from under our roof for a time, is very frequently on my mind in prayer. I am very anxious about his bodily health. O for a corresponding and even greater anxiety for the early conversion of his soul! At his present age we could not believe him saved in case of death, without some evidences that the Spirit is working in his heart. I do not wonder now at David's weeping when his wicked son Absalom was suddenly cut off. How pathetic and piercing are his words: 'O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!'

When his son was absent at school, and afterwards spending five years' apprenticeship at Swansea to the chemist's and druggist's business, he was in the habit of writing to him earnest letters, seeking to impress upon his mind the great subject of salvation. Every recurring birthday brought an epistle of more than usual length. We subjoin a few of these, not only because they throw light on the character of Mr. Griffiths as a parent, but likewise because they are worthy of careful and attentive perusal by every young man.

*"Burry Green, Jan. 22, 1846.*

"MY DEAR WILLIAM,—This is your birthday; you are now eighteen years old, and beginning the state of manhood. I have thought seriously of the morning

on which you were born (it is to me like yesterday), on which, after I first saw you, I retired into my room and endeavoured to give you to the Lord, begging that he would take you entirely, soul and body, for time and eternity, and make you his own child through the redemption of Christ, and the washing of regeneration, infusing into your heart, in infancy, the new nature from above; and beseeching the Lord, should you be spared to grow up to mature years, that it would please Him to bring you publicly into his church, and make you an useful member of Christ's family on earth. These prayers and requests I have often repeated since then, with considerable emotions and many fears. Nothing can affect the souls of pious parents, next to their own salvation, so much as the spiritual welfare of their children. How their hearts in this respect are continually struggling between hope and fear, while they see no *decision* on the part of their dear offspring in favor of true piety.

"I don't know, my dear William, how it is *secretly in your heart*, for you have never yet told me whether you have seen and felt yourself a lost sinner, and have a secret desire to flee to Jesus Christ for salvation, as men flee from a house on fire, or the mariners flee from a sinking ship; or whether you take it for granted that religion is a good thing for those who choose to have it, but that you are excusable without it, particularly while you continue in your present situation, that such a step is next to impossible; and therefore you allow your mind to rest at ease, and grow up more and more indifferent about your future state.

"When these thoughts and fears (on your own account) take hold of me, I assure you, my dear William, it pains me very much, for I cannot bear the thought of your soul being banished for ever from Christ

and the society of the first-born in heaven, to be the eternal monument of God's wrath amongst unbelievers and rejecters of the gospel in hell. Yet I see clearly that all sinners and neglecters of their own salvation, be they ever so blameless and moral in their outward deportment, are going towards that endless misery,—the enemy persuading them, when they think of it, that they cannot help it, for that they cannot save themselves, or make themselves better; while in truth they do not believe the danger they are in to be one-millionth part what it is, shutting their eyes on the testimony of God's word. When I reflect on these things, it often occurs to me, have I done all in my power, as far as means go, to save the soul of my child? Have I taught you, when under my care, with sufficient care and perseverance about the state we are in by nature, and shown you the infinite love of Christ in coming to the world, and suffering and dying for his enemies in order to save them—the freedom and welcome by which these are invited, and pressed to come to him,—the readiness with which he hears and answers the prayers of all who call upon him, whether young or old?

“Again, I am much tossed about in my thoughts, since you have grown up a youth, whether I have done all I could for your spiritual welfare, and whether I have acted right in placing you where you are to learn the business. My only satisfaction on that point is that I prayed to the Lord to direct me for a considerable time, and waited to see, but no other door was opening. . . . You were within a short distance for us to help you on, and use what little influence we possess in your favour, better than we could were you far away; therefore I still hope, and earnestly pray, that your present situation will not prove a snare for

you to neglect your soul, for no situation can hinder the Spirit of God to work on the heart. I am somewhat comforted in this when I think of Obadiah in the house of Ahab, even at the time when that wicked king, and more wicked queen, killed many of the Lord's prophets. Yet, my dear William, great watchfulness on your part, and constant prayer, reflection, and meditation on God's word, are necessary that you may not be hardened. I shall be glad if you will write me a private letter when you have the opportunity, and when you can summon sufficient resolution to do so. Of course I don't wish you to say anything of yourself but what is strictly true. . . . Think of what I have written.

"Your very affectionate father,

"WM. GRIFFITHS."

In November, 1847, his son was attacked by small pox, which painful dispensation of Providence was blessed to produce hopeful evidences of decision of character. This took place while he was an apprentice at Swansea; and during a visit to his home for the purpose of recruiting his health, he took the opportunity of uniting himself with the church under his father's pastoral care. Mr. Griffiths makes this reference to the pleasing event in his diary:—"December 23, 1847. This forenoon we had our society at Bethesda, being our church meeting before the Lord's Supper. I had the pleasure of receiving my own son and only child a full member into our church. May the Lord sanction in heaven what we in this instance did on earth. I had



given him to the Lord the day on which he was born, and generally every day from that to the present time; but have been led to pray more earnestly for his conversion from the time he was bound an apprentice about four years ago. Providence, I believe, ordered this last illness, so as to deepen his convictions, and to open the present opportunity for him to unite with the church where he has been trained up from his infancy. He answered the questions put to him with modesty and feeling. I rejoiced to see him one of the flock; still I rejoice with trembling, well knowing the many snares and difficulties in the way of honouring his profession and maintaining his ground. But where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty and there is victory."

On another birthday he wrote to him the following letter:—

*"Burry Green, Jan. 22, 1848.*

"MY DEAR WILLIAM,—Thinking you will probably expect a letter from me on this day I write a few lines. To-morrow you will complete your twentieth year; and the year just closed has been to you a year of trial, and a year of promise. If the Lord has changed your heart, and brought you from darkness into his marvellous light, which I hope he has, it will be a year remarkable in your life, and like the night the children of Israel came out of Egypt. 'It was a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out of the land of Egypt,' Exod. xii. 42. They were commanded to observe it throughout their generations.

So will the year 1847 be to you a memorial before the Lord, in which you were enabled to take hold of his covenant by a public profession of your faith in Christ, which I humbly hope you have done as the fruit of the Spirit's inward change of heart. Because (as you well know) an outward change from the world into the church of Christ, without an inward change in the soul is only a *delusion and a snare*, whereby the enemy of souls takes fresh advantage to destroy them, by lulling their convictions into carnal security. Therefore I do truly hope that the outward step which you have taken, and which it was your duty to take in obedience to Christ's command, is the result of God's grace imparted by his Spirit to your heart, and that it will prove its truth and sincerity in all your future life by spiritual growth in the knowledge of God and of yourself.

"It is very probable you would have continued in the same state as you were in before, for the present at least (however your conviction admonished you to the contrary) had not the Lord laid upon you that heavy affliction by which you were laid aside from your work and irreligious associates, and by the gradual removal of which you had the leisure to come home and mix with those who feel deeply for your spiritual welfare. Therefore, tho' the last was a year of *trial*, of severe suffering in the body for a certain time, it was sent for a particular purpose. The Lord seemed to say, Sufficient is the time past for you to live in that undecided manner. 'If the Lord is God, then follow him.'

"Very likely if left to *your* discretion and *mine* when the *best time* would be for you to join the church, we would have fixed it somewhere at the end of your apprenticeship, thinking that till then there would be insurmountable difficulties in the way. Thus always

man's ways and plans shew how ignorant and short-sighted man is; and how infinitely wise and good the Lord is! Who but God can see the future? That which we fondly predict may never come to pass; and if the time should arrive, a thousand incidents may arrive with it or before it, every one of which might overthrow all our cherished anticipations.

"You see farther how all hearts are in the hand of the Lord by the ready response of your master to my letter of last week, whereby he is willing for you to attend the church meetings once a fortnight.

"Hitherto, my dear William, all seems in the order of Divine Providence to work together for your good. Therefore let me now address you a few words of counsel for your best improvement of all this goodness of the Lord.

"First of all, have a jealous eye continually over the inward frame of your mind. The heart is like the chemist's laboratory, where many elements meet, where constant struggles between contrary principles take place, grace and sin, pride and humility, selfishness and self-denial, light and darkness, and all kinds of passions. Therefore endeavour to understand who is the king within you, and press it on your deliberate judgment that you have no power for anything good only as you obtain it from God; yet that you must have this blessing of divine help regularly, or you will not persevere in the ways of religion.

"Secondly, Be very discreet in the choice of company. Of course in your present situation, as far as regards home, you have no choice; you must make the best of things as they are by shewing all prudence, kindness, readiness to serve, and firmness of purpose not to commit sin. But I mean other company that may occasionally come in your way. Youth are easily

entangled with the religious pretensions of others who have no religion in their hearts, or have other motives that prompt their profession of love and attachment to your piety. Therefore be kind and generous towards all; but choose none as bosom friends but the most spiritual and holy in conversation, and the most experimental in the knowledge of their own hearts. Have no intimate conversation with *religious females*, except with the married and the aged.

"Lastly, Pray frequently. Though your time is very limited, your opportunities of retirement and solitude very few, yet endeavour to cultivate a praying spirit. Be vigilant to redeem all the time you have, by a system of diligence. Avoid trifling away your leisure minutes; above all, endeavour to remember always that the eye of God is upon you, and that now you profess before the world that this God is your Father and best Friend.

"Your mother writes you a few lines, therefore I shall say nothing about her, only assure you that it is our united and daily prayer for you that you may grow in grace, and that the Lord may please to preserve you from all evil.

"I am, my dear William,

"Your affectionate Father,

"WM. GRIFFITHS."

We add another that has special reference to the same subject:—

"*Burry Green, Nov. 24, 1848.*

"MY DEAR WILLIAM,—It is now some time since I have written anything to you on spiritual affairs; but I am thinking frequently about your best and eternal welfare. About this time last year you were brought

by the small pox near the gates of death. The Lord saw fit then in his great mercy to spare you, and raise you up again, and from that time till now has greatly established your health; and what is infinitely more valuable, has brought you into his church, I trust thro' the door of the sheep, by the saving influences of his Spirit and grace upon your heart, so that you may go out no more. This is the greatest mercy that a man can receive. The thoughts of this mercy are very cheering, and call for continual praise to the great Author of your new birth. It requires on your part and mine great devotedness in living to his glory, with new efforts to make our calling and election sure. Grace is a principle that must be cultivated, because it is a new life in the soul that must be fed and nourished. Here is the grand difference between the nominal and spiritual believer. All the care of the first is about his outward profession, to live upright before men, and save himself from disgrace in the eyes of the world; while the latter feels daily another and greater care of the inward motions of his soul. . . This begets often a humble and self-denying feeling in the mind, which leads to godly sorrow, and *looks directly to the atoning blood of Christ* for pardon and peace. But with all these exercises and conflicts, the true believer is not less careful than others respecting his outward deportment, but feels more than hypocrites can the obligation of maintaining a holy and spotless life before the world, because he feels this from the actings of grace in his heart, and not from the mere strength of natural understanding.

"Perhaps when you read this you will understand in some degree the truth of what I am stating.

"You know *upon reflection* what are the rising thoughts in your mind respecting God and religion,

what you have to condemn and hate in yourself, and what you have to approve and endeavour to cultivate. All good thoughts must be watered like tender flowers, with sincere and frequent prayers to God and the Spirit of all grace.

“David asks in Psal. cxix. 9, ‘Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?’ Then replies, ‘By taking heed thereto according to thy word.’ By ‘way’ he means the whole of the inward and outward conduct, or the acting of the young man towards God and religion, and towards his fellow-creatures. The word of God is the only safe guide in all this; therefore David loved the word more than gold, and felt it sweeter to his soul than honey. The carnal mind is *selfish, proud, and wayward*, like some impetuous stream, ready to *dash over* every precipice, and run down to the fearful gulf of perdition; but the word of God *well planted in the affections of the heart* has a still stronger hold upon the soul, so as to curb and slay its sinful propensities, and gently lead it back to truth and holiness. Therefore it is of the utmost importance to the young man (and old men too) ‘that the word of Christ may dwell in him richly in all wisdom;’ for this is the sword of the Spirit by which inward and outward enemies must be slain.

“I certainly feel for your present confined state, and want of more intercourse with religious friends, and as I was telling you the other day, the opportunity of exercising your talent sometimes publicly in the means of grace. There is a danger in this lest you should grow timid, and sink into a kind of quiet silent professor.

“On the other hand many young men have been spoiled by too much public exercise of their gifts; being led away by spiritual pride, and the foolish

applause of thoughtless members in the Christian church. But your apprenticeship is now drawing near its end. We know not where or what your next situation may be. I would therefore press it on your mind to endeavour as much as possible for the present, as well as in all the future, to keep up a daily sense in your heart of God's presence and goodness,—to have some fresh thoughts every day of Christ's Person and sacrifice, and of his ability and willingness to save you from all guilt and sin, and keep you from the path of the destroyer.

"I am not without anxiety about your future adventures, should you have to go farther from home, knowing that you are yet, like all other young men of your class, without experience of the world, and may soon be entangled by *pretended friendship*, which disarms watchfulness and just suspicion. However, my only safe retreat and consolation in this respect is the word of promise and the throne of grace:—'I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.' 'Leave thy fatherless children; I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me,' Isaiah xliv. 3: Jer. xlix. 2. But with these promises we have a duty to perform, without which we have no ground to expect the promised blessing. We must watch and pray not to enter into temptation. 'Be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.' Avoid always all appearance of evil, and cleave to that which is good.

"One thing in particular I would wish you to remember; that is, never to attempt to *hide* or *conceal* your public profession of religion in any place or company. There is no need of parading our religion before the world by boastful talkativeness; this is Pharasaical vanity; and on the other hand we must not *shrink* from

*avowing* our adherence to Christ and his cause when the infidel world attempt to frighten us with jeers, or shame us with their laughter. I remember once I brought great guilt upon my conscience, the first year I joined the society, happening to be working for a few days with some strangers who were scoffers at all religion; one of them put the question to me whether I did not belong to those Methodists; and I answered in the negative; but this gave me such suffering that I determined ever after to avow my sentiments, and my public profession of the same, upon every necessary occasion; and found this by far the best way to command respect even from those who hated religion in their hearts.

"There is a kind of awe connected with the true fear of God, which strikes his enemies with shame. . . . The present life, though often surrounded with cares and anxieties, will soon pass away, and we shall be numbered with our fathers; but how pleasant the thought of being for ever with the Lord! How necessary it is to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that the Lord worketh in us to will and to do. May the Spirit of all grace continually sanctify your heart and memory, and incline you to do the will of God from pure motives.

"Your dear mother unites with me in every fervent wish and prayer for your temporal and eternal happiness.

"I am, dear William,

"Your ever affectionate Father,

"WM. GRIFFITHS."

The following is one of the last of these birth-day epistles:—

"*Burry Green, Jan. 22, 1851.*

"MY DEAR WILLIAM,—I am reminded by the date that this is your birthday; therefore, according to my



regular practice from your childhood, since you first left your father's roof to go to school, I write something to you on this day.

"This is your thirtieth birthday; according to the course of nature you are now the *man*, and I, who am forty years older, begin the stage of *second childhood*.

"There is something in the retrospect for you and me which demands our most serious reflection and warmest gratitude. It is easier to ascertain our natural birthday than the day of second birth; but the latter is of infinitely greater importance. The first, being recorded by our friends, is always open for our inspection; but the second, being recorded in the Lamb's book of life, is not so easily seen.

"Yet 'of Zion it is said, This and that man was born in her. The Lord shall count when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there.' In many worldly occupations, and the obtaining of earthly inheritances, men are obliged to prove their age and lineage, by the public register. So God also puts all his family to a similar test, when he is pleased to admit them into a closer intimacy with himself, to 'give diligence to make your calling and election sure.' 'Cast not away your confidence, which hath great reward.' 'And we desire that every one of you shew the same diligence to the full *assurance of hope* unto the end.' Also, 'Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?' None who admit the necessity and value of true faith, and spiritual religion, will deny this. Still thousands of professing Christians excuse themselves from ascertaining it, because of the *mental exercise, self-denial, and spiritual labour* which must be put forth before it can be obtained. The slug-

gard will rather sit down in ignorance at the foot of the mountain than exert his limbs to climb to the top to enjoy the glorious prospect around him, and the beautiful country which is seen in the distances—‘the land that is far off,’ and the kingdom prepared for the saints.

“The surest and safest way to find out our new birth is to know the *inward ruling principles* of our hearts, not merely the moral uprightness of actions towards men,—that is attainable by moral training and self-respect,—but the scriptural motions and motives of the soul.

“This is beautifully portrayed by our blessed Redeemer, when he says, ‘The water that I shall give him shall be in him a *well of water springing up* into everlasting life.’ There are so many things which spring up in the heart, especially where there are great worldly cares, with daily and hourly demands on the mind, so that we may find it difficult to know which things rule the soul. Therefore the question is left in abeyance from month to month, and from year to year, till religion becomes with many Christians merely a bodily exercise, complying with a certain number of duties—just as animals are trained to perform certain movements, but have no minds, and cannot perform anything intellectually; so it is with men who use intellect, but no faith, in the practice of religion. While things continue in this easy, carnal, and indolent manner, it is impossible to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion whether or not we are born of God. It is the quiet, easy way, by which the god of this world blinds the hearts of thousands. It is a *religious blind*, for he knows well that this sort of people, from their habits and manner of training, would startle at another sort of blind; but here he keeps them contented.

"This being the cause, I hope that you, my dear William, don't live on this enchanted ground; that your spiritual and eternal state is not put in abeyance to your worldly affairs—that you do not say to your conscience (when accusing you), 'Go thy way at this time; when I have a convenient season I will send for thee;' but that you are enabled in some comfortable measure to trace the saving work of God's Spirit in your soul from the effects it produces in you. Experience is the surest proof, and always a sure witness. Only remember that *spiritual experience* must be always the production of walking in the light; and walking in the light is the fruit of regularly departing from all sin—specially the sins that easily beset us.

"I feel thankful that the Lord saw fit to continue my life so long (always an invalid), to see you grown up to manhood, and more so, to see you for years united with the church of Christ. Thankful also to the kind Providence that has watched over you and over us, your affectionate father and mother, to the present day. Surely goodness and mercy have followed us all our way. All things have worked together for our good; our old age is abundantly surrounded with comforts; and hitherto I am permitted to labour regularly and extensively in the gospel field, where I have completed forty-one years since last week.

"Death in many forms has cut down considerable numbers with you and with us during the past year, but hitherto has not been permitted to approach us. But it is our wisdom and our duty to be always ready. Come it must; perhaps in an hour that we think not. 'Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments.' Let us 'be found of him in peace,' always striving against sin.....I am going out immediately for the evening, therefore must close this letter with

our parental affection, and many prayers, hoping that father, mother, and child shall, by the grace of God, arrive safe at last in the mansions of light.

"I am, dear William,

"Your affectionate Father,

"WM. GRIFFITHS."

Having thus seen Mr. Griffiths at the head of his family, let us return to follow him in his ministerial and pastoral labours.

## CHAPTER IX.

Mr. Griffiths at home—a week's work—schools and catechisms—the “subject”—death of the Rev. R. Jones.

THOSE who are unacquainted with Gower can form but a very inadequate conception of the character and extent of Mr. Griffiths's labours there. He had three chapels under his charge; and besides supplying these, there were several preaching stations in different and distant parts of the peninsula, at each of which, as a rule, he officiated once a fortnight on some week evening. He had members and hearers living in ten different parishes; and since it was too far for many of these to attend regularly at either of the chapels, he thought it his duty, and made it his pleasure, to bring the means of grace as frequently as possible to their very doors. On the Sabbath morning at Bethesda Chapel, there were some present from Stone Mill on one side, and from Rhosilly on the other; and the distance between these two places cannot be much, if anything, less than ten miles. Those however who travelled those distances must have possessed both bodily strength and spiritual zeal; and since many were deficient in one or the other of these, it was necessary that for their benefit religious services should be held in the localities in which they lived. The peninsula is intersected a little to the east of Bethesda by

the Burry river, and terminates towards the west at Worm's Head. On the north is the Burry Estuary, and on the south the Bristol Channel. The district thus marked comprised a great portion, but by no means the whole of the field of his labour. We heard him more than once pleasantly remark: "I travel from sea to sea, and from the river to the utmost ends of the earth every fortnight to preach the gospel."

We should like to enable our readers to accompany him just for one week in his home labours and excursions. We shall begin with Monday morning. It is the first Monday in the month. He comes down from his room about eight o'clock, still labouring to some extent under the fatigue arising from the exhausting labours of the previous day. The first thing to be attended to is family worship. This is never by any means hurried over. It is a regular and solemn service. First of all each member of the little family repeats a text of scripture. He begins himself, Mrs. Griffiths follows, then William, then the servant, and should a stranger be present, he is at liberty to do the same, but not pressed. The chapter that comes in due course is read, as well as the excellent observations on it in Peter Williams's large family Bible; and the service is concluded by an earnest prayer. Breakfast over, he retires to his study upstairs. There he opens the drawer, and takes out the thick octavo diary,

and there the engagements of the previous day, and the manner in which he passed through them, his own feelings and the apparent effects on the people, are recorded. The "Patriot" has been brought down from Swansea by a friend late on Saturday evening. Of course it has not hitherto been opened, but now it must be glanced over, to see how the world is going on. The "Evangelical Magazine," and other religious periodicals, both English and Welsh, have likewise arrived. These are consulted chiefly for the sake of the information they give respecting the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom. We never knew a man who was so thoroughly acquainted with all the movements of the religious world as Mr. Griffiths. These will occupy him for the greatest part of the morning, and if there is no one ill in the neighbourhood, perhaps he will return to them after dinner. In the evening the monthly missionary prayer meeting is held at Bethesda, otherwise there would have been a sermon at Pitt or Perry's Wood.

The next morning is spent in the study; but instead of the paper and periodicals, some work on divinity is for a time carefully read. The remaining part of the morning is devoted to earnest pulpit preparation. It is not always that a mere skeleton suffices. Many sermons are written at full length. In the evening there is a sermon at Pitt; and since the dear family re-

siding there expects him to tea, and since he wants to call upon some friends by the way, he starts soon after dinner. The grey mare is brought out. It is true that he rode a bay for the last years of his life; but we always considered her as an interloper. We never could bring ourselves to admit that any living animal had a right to carry Mr. Griffiths, but the grey mare. She is a stout, firm, and determined animal. There is a perfect understanding between her and her master. He is not in a hurry, neither is she. Strangers who have the privilege of mounting her, must not expect that she will either act or move in any other than her usual way. We rode her ourselves sometimes; and being of a somewhat hasty nature, we would fain have persuaded her to go faster. But she would doggedly and successfully resist all attempts of the kind. In her manner she would say, "This is my pace, and this is my master's; it is useless for you to attempt to make me alter it." The reader will excuse this digression. The grey mare is brought; Mr. Griffiths rides over to Pitt; has pleasant meditations by the way; preaches in a crowded room; and if the evening is fine, rides home again. The distance is between three and four miles.

Wednesday evening there is a sermon announced at Nicholastone. Of course Mr. Voss, dear Mr. Voss, expects him early in the after-



noon, if not to dinner. He looks out for him, in fact goes out to meet him half the way to Penrice Park gate. When he sees him coming, he raises his staff, and flourishes it over his head as a signal of welcome; and he is scarcely within hearing, when he is addressed in something like the following strain:—"How are you? How is Mrs. Griffiths? When did you hear from your son?" The two friends spend a happy afternoon together in that cozy and comfortable little parlour. At six o'clock there is a society in the kitchen, where the few neighbouring members assemble for religious conversation. At seven the room fills, and the public service is held. Mr. Griffiths remains here for the night. He retires to his room early, for late hours are not the rule here; and unless he is tempted to pull down a volume or two of that ponderous Encyclopedia, as we have been sometimes, he is in bed long before eleven.

Next morning he rides home. There is a church meeting at Bethesda in the evening, and on Friday evening a sermon at Llangennith. Saturday is spent in-doors, hard at study, for with the manifold engagements of the week, there has been but little time to prepare for preaching three times on the morrow. The following week is spent much in the same manner, only on the other side of the country, from Porteynon to Rhosilly and Llanmadock. This is continued

month after month, and year after year, for nearly forty years.

Mr. Griffiths did not cease to go his usual rounds from the Burry Estuary to the Bristol Channel, and from the Burry river to the Worm's Head, until he was arrested by that illness which in a few weeks terminated in his dissolution. We have before us a tabular statement of his labours from 1825 to 1836 inclusive, from which it appears that during those twelve years he had preached 2522 times, and attended 752 other religious services in Gower; and that in each of those years he had taken a preaching tour of from four to six weeks in some part of South Wales, or had supplied for an equal length of time in England. On one of these occasions he preached five weeks for the Rev. Rowland Hill at Wotton-under-edge; and on another he supplied six weeks at Spafields Chapel, London. It may be that, before we finish our task, we shall follow him to one or the other of these places; but our present subject is his work in Gower.

Besides the Sabbath Schools at these chapels, there were two others regularly held, one at Rhosilly and another at Nicholastone, at the house of Mr. Voss, and taught chiefly by him and his faithful servants. Each of these schools learnt and repeated periodically and in public, catechisms, or, as they were called in Gower, "subjects," prepared for them by Mr. Griffiths him-

self. A scriptural subject was explained and enforced in the form of questions and answers. It was then divided into three or four parts, as circumstances required, and each part written carefully and legibly on a separate slip of paper. One of these slips was sent to each school, with directions written on its back to "keep it clean and return it." Many in Gower have learnt to read handwriting by poring over these slips, and some have been induced to acquire the art of writing that they may be able to copy Mr. Griffiths's "subjects." Each school, after having learnt and repeated its portion, had to exchange its paper with another; and so on until every school had learnt and repeated every part of the subject. There is a sufficient quantity at hand of these manuscript catechisms to fill a volume. We subjoin the following as an example:—

THE CHARACTER AND EXAMPLES OF JESUS CHRIST.

QUESTION. What are the examples of Jesus Christ wherein his people are to follow him?

ANSWER. 1. Christ devoted himself early to the service of God. Luke ii. 46—49.

2. Christ was obedient to his parents. Luke ii. 50—52.

3. Christ was fond of doing good to all men. Luke ix. 55, 56; Acts x. 38.

4. Christ was full of meekness and humility. Mat. xi. 29; Mat. xii. 19, 20.

5. Christ when he was reviled, reviled not again. 1 Peter ii. 21—23.

6. Christ was always obedient to the will of his Father. John viii. 29, 55.

7. Christ always spoke the truth, and nothing but the truth. John viii. 44—46.

8. Christ gave wise answers to all his enemies. John viii. 7, 9.

9. Christ reproved sin in all, yet in a way that led to conviction without giving offence. Mark x. 21, 22.

10. Christ reproved public hypocrisy very severely. Mat. xxiii. 23, 27.

11. Christ was perfect in self-denial. Phil. ii. 7, 8.

12. Christ was full of contentment in a state of poverty and want. Luke ix. 58; 2 Cor. viii. 9.

13. Christ was obedient to the laws of men where he lived. Mat. xxii. 17—21.

14. Christ had a great love and regard to the law of God. Mat. v. 17, 18.

15. Christ was zealous to advance the glory of God on earth. John xvii. 4; John vii. 18.

16. Christ was a great example to his people in private prayer. Luke vi. 12; Mark i. 35.

17. Christ regularly attended the public worship of God. Luke iv. 16; Luke xxi. 37, 38.

18. Christ submitted to all religious ordinances of Divine appointment. Mat. iii. 14, 15.

19. Christ abounded in the duty of thanksgiving. Mat. xi. 25, 26.

20. Christ gave us an example in asking the blessing of God upon our food. Mat. xiv. 19, 20.

21. Christ manifested great pity and compassion to the distressed. Mat. xx. 30—34.

22. Christ manifested much sympathy with the sorrowful. John xi. 33—36.

23. Christ was a sincere friend. John xv. 15, 16.

24. Christ's conversation was very edifying to the hearts of men. Luke iv. 22; xxiv. 32.

25. Christ was full of forgiveness to his enemies. Luke xxiii. 33, 34.

26. Christ was full of zeal for purity in the worship of God. John ii. 14—17.

27. Christ was grieved and wept at the sins of men. Luke xix. 41, 42.

28. Christ was perfectly holy and harmless in all his actions. Heb. vii. 26; Mat. xvii. 5.

29. Christ was perfectly submissive to all the will of his Father. Mat. xxvi. 39, 42.

30. Christ was an example of perfect patience even in his great sufferings on the cross. Isaiah liii. 7; 1 Peter iii. 18.

The above subject is to be divided between the three Sunday Schools, to go round the whole twice; each class in each school to repeat only one head at one time. Bethesda Chapel, Nov. 2nd, 1835.

Trinity School first, Rhosilly second, Bethesda last.

The following questions to be answered at the end by each school repeating together in one voice:—

#### TRINITY.

QUES. What do you learn from these examples?

ANS. From this we learn that none have a right to the name of Christ, unless they endeavour from the heart to walk in his steps. 2 Tim. ii. 19—21.

#### RHOSILLY.

QUES. How are Christians to follow the examples of Jesus Christ?

ANS. Christians are to follow the examples of Christ by receiving of his spirit and grace, and continue in his fellowship.

## BETHESDA.

**QUES.** What are the benefits which Christians receive in following the examples of Jesus Christ?

**ANS.** Those who follow Christ shall not walk in darkness, but shall have light and life. John viii. 12, 32.

The catechism Sunday was a great day in Gower, greater by far than their favourite "mab-sant" had ever been. The young people came together from all parts of the country; and they were all serious, for they were coming together to be questioned. The floor of the chapel was crowded with listeners, and the galleries equally crowded with singers and reciters of the subject. There was no danger of their giving way to levity; was not Mr. Griffiths in the pulpit? Was he not looking upon them? One glance from his eye was sufficient at once to dispel every inclination to be frivolous. Many hundreds of the people of Gower have thus been equally privileged with that devoted young servant of Christ to whom it was said, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scripture, which is able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Mr. Griffiths himself generally much enjoyed these school gatherings. Of one of them he writes: "In the evening these Sabbath Schools met at Bethesda, and there was a very large congregation. The place was filled to excess, both floor and galleries. The schools repeated

their subjects very correctly and feelingly, and the greatest attention was paid by the hearers throughout the whole service. Trinity School opened with the subject, 'Religious Truth.' Bethesda School followed: subject, 'Hypocrisy—its extent, nature, and evil;' and Rhosilly school followed with inferences drawn from both the subjects just then repeated." Of another he says: "This forenoon the Sabbath Schools met at Bethesda, and there was a large congregation of attentive hearers. It was a beautiful day for them to come together from distant parts of the peninsula. All seemed to feel interested in the subject, and many scripture portions were recited by the schools. I hope that this mode of sowing the good seed is not in vain. The sword of truth is always sharp and powerful when it is wielded by the Spirit of God."

While Mr. Griffiths was thus vigorously pursuing his work in the Lord's vineyard, his dear friend and fellow-labourer, the Rev. Rees Jones of Penclawdd, was removed to his rest on the 18th of February, 1829. The next day we have the following entry in Mr. Griffiths's journal:—

"I heard this afternoon that my dear friend and brother in the ministry, Mr. Rees Jones of Penclawdd, is no longer an inhabitant of this world. He was called to his reward yesterday about eleven o'clock in the forenoon. He was an 'Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile.'

One well instructed in the oracles of truth, and more than a match for the ministers of Satan who wickedly wrest the word of God to their own damnation. None of these cared for his company, or wished more than once to enter the lists with him. He knew the nature, scope, and connection of the holy scriptures better than most men of my acquaintance. He was bold in reproving sin, but tender in recommending the Saviour. If faulty at all, it was in censuring too harshly persons whom he thought to be wrong, and things of which he disapproved. The Lord was pleased to support him in his last illness; and at some intervals, as he told me, his soul was filled with joy in believing. About three weeks before his death he told me that he felt so happy that he could shout and sing in rapturous joy, if he had only bodily strength. I feel deeply, for in his gain I have to deplore my own loss." Mr. Griffiths preached two funeral sermons for his friend. In the morning at Bethesda from the words, "He shall enter into peace;" and in the evening at Old Walls from the words. "Knowest thou not that a prince and a great man hath fallen this day in Israel?"



## CHAPTER X.

Six weeks in the metropolis.

IN the preceding chapter we referred to Mr. Griffiths's supplying at Spafields Chapel, London, and at the Tabernacle, Wotton-under-edge. We intimated that perhaps before closing our task we might follow him to one or the other of these places. We are now about to redeem that partial promise, and to lay before our readers some of his engagements and experiences in the great metropolis of the world. We should like to be able to do it well, but freely confess that we feel some misgivings upon the subject. At the same time we suspect that they are but very faint when compared with those which agitated his mind when he was on the eve of taking the journey, and entering upon the engagements which we are now about to describe. After he had promised to go, he began to feel very nervous; and as the time for fulfilling his promise was drawing nearer and nearer, there are evidences in his diary of increasing anxiety. On Thursday, August 5, 1835, he writes: "My time to go to London is now approaching. I feel sometimes very low, and think it is impossible for me to be able to stand and preach in that public place, and am then sorry that I ever promised to go. At other times I feel some faint hope that the Lord

will not allow me to sink, but will make me a blessing to some souls. I had no hand myself in the first step, neither had I any thought or desire on the subject before they wrote to me."

On the following Monday we have this entry: "To morrow I intend to leave and begin my journey. I think that my two chief desires now are—1. That the Lord may accompany me, be my Teacher, and my Guardian, make himself known to me as my God and Father in Christ, and make me a blessing to the people among whom I intend to labour for the next six weeks. 2. That he may bless the cause here in my absence—come with the ministers who are expected to preach in these chapels; keep the members in peace and in prayer, abounding more and more in godly fear and zeal for his glory—bless and protect my little family till by his help I come to them again. May the Lord grant these requests to me for Christ's sake. Amen."

There is one more entry before he leaves home. "11, Tuesday morning. I am now setting out. The time is up. My dear partner accompanies me to Swansea. I feel somewhat more composed in mind this morning. I have asked myself several times on my knees before the Lord, whether there is any wrong motive influencing my mind in taking this journey. *I know not any.* I think that my chief desire is to be useful to the souls of my fellow creatures, and I

hope to receive some benefit to my own soul. I am full of imperfections, and prone to evil. But the Lord is my Helper, a present help in time of need. To Him I desire to give myself anew in Jesus Christ. I have enough. I have all things. Farewell, my little room! Farewell my family and the dear spot of my labours! I know that these will follow me wherever I go. I shall always think of them in my prayers before the Lord. Farewell!"

That night was spent at Swansea; and the following day he went by steamer to Bristol, when he preached in the evening at the Welsh Chapel, Broadmead, the place which to him had such sweet reminiscences, for there he had first cast his lot among the people of the living God. Next morning he took the coach, and started early for London. The day was fine, the company agreeable, and they "travelled very expeditiously," for they reached the metropolis against nine o'clock in the evening. He had arranged to stay at the house of an old acquaintance, the Rev. J. Durrant, who had been for some time minister of the Burrows Chapel, Swansea. When he reached his destination after a fatiguing journey, and an hour or more of London bustle, he was glad to "hear the voices of familiar friends before" he "could see their faces." "I feel now," he adds, "very thankful to God for his great goodness in bringing me

safe to my journey's end." On the following Sabbath his public labours at Spafields Chapel began, and we have his experiences of that day.

"Low in mind: I endeavoured to cry unto the Lord for help. In the forenoon I began my public duties at Spafields. I sat in the vestry while prayers were read, and then went up to the pulpit. While praying I felt very nervous, especially in repeating the Lord's prayer. I have never used it before in public; and though I have it perfectly in my memory, I could hardly get through with it. I thought that I had blundered, but found afterwards that I had repeated it correctly. I got on better with preaching; my text was, 'I am the bread of life.' The congregation was large, but the chapel was not full. The people seemed to pay great attention to what I said. The place is of a very peculiar construction, quite circular, having two galleries that go round about it, and then rises into a kind of dome, much in the form of a large glass house. In the evening I preached from the text, 'God requireth that which is past.' There were fewer people than in the morning, still it was a good congregation, and all seemed very attentive. From some conversation I had with the clerk after this service, I understood that they were averse to loud preaching. I thought that this was a hint to me. May the Lord give me wisdom and fidelity."

One thing made him feel rather uncomfortable: none of the people came to speak with him after the service. This was enough to puzzle any Welsh preacher. In his native country he has to pass through numberless shakings of hands in his progress from the pulpit to the chapel house; and he may deem himself fortunate if the full levee which he has to hold there does not last more than an hour.

"The pious clerk," Mr. G. writes, "who is a most respectable man, and has filled that office here for forty-two years, spoke with pleasure of the Welsh ministers who, from time to time, have supplied at this chapel. He expressed his grief at the distant conduct of their leading men, who do not think proper to come to speak to their minister; and said one good man had been so much hurt at this coldness of theirs, that he had expressed his intention never to visit them again. I told him that I did not think that I should feel hurt at all, if this was their constant practice. If the Lord will please to enable me to deliver my message faithfully, I shall go my way rejoicing, leaving the consequences between Him and their own souls, for neither the frowns nor the smiles of men ought to have any influence on the ministers of Christ. A great apostle has said, 'If I yet pleased men, I am not the servant of Christ.' Who knows but that God may effect some lasting good

in this place by such an insignificant instrument as myself? I feel more encouraged by this thought than if I had met with applause and caresses; though of course I do not know what opinion these people have formed of me. Very probably it is not a flattering one. Whatever it is, I wish to renew my dependence upon God."

The following day he spent for the most part in-doors "writing a sermon on Ephesians ii. 7;" and on Tuesday morning, after visiting the Bank of England, the Guildhall, and the Royal Exchange, with his friend Mr. Durrant, he went at eleven o'clock to St. Bartholomew's Church, to hear that eminent servant of Christ, the Rev. Mr. Wilkinson, deliver one of his week-day sermons. "The venerable old clergyman," he writes, "preached a very good sermon from Psalm cxxxix. 6. He spoke of the ruined state of man—his ignorance of God and of himself—the free grace of Christ in redeeming and justifying his church, and the humbling sense which the saints have of themselves. He exhorted all to put their whole trust in Christ for salvation. The church was very full, so much so that we could not get near the pulpit. He preaches here every Tuesday morning to a large congregation. Many respectable people, and some of the nobility, always come together to hear him. I felt very thankful that the gospel is preached so faithfully at such a place, and to such people."

He visited most of the "lions of London." At the British Museum he was lost in wonder. He almost lost his breath in climbing up to the dome of St. Paul's, and after descending to the nave, and witnessing the performance of the daily service there, he felt that there was very little of the devotional spirit of the apostle after whose name that wonderful pile was called, and that if Paul had entered the place during the solemnity, he would have experienced pretty much the same feelings as he did when walking about among the altars of Athens. He heard as many as possible of the leading ministers of the metropolis. He greatly enjoyed the earnest and powerful preaching of the Hon. and Rev. Baptist W. Noel, whom he heard several times at St. John's, Bedford Row. But there was one thing which he greatly missed. There were no "society meetings" among the English. It was a new thing for him to spend a week without attending one of these. No matter how much preaching and other religious services had been performed, there was some sense of deficiency, if among its various engagements there had not been a meeting for religious experience. The Welsh congregation at Jewin Crescent kept up the good Welsh custom. It was true that it was very far from his lodgings; but that did not matter, to Jewin Crescent he must go; and after his long, fatiguing walk, and reaching his home at ten

o'clock, when he sat down to write in his journal, he said with reference to this meeting, "I enjoyed it in my soul."

While in London he had a pleasant interview with Lord Barham; was much pleased with his kindness and affability, and in compliance with his Lordship's wish, he conducted family worship for him at his house. Having received a ticket from him, he went that evening to the House of Lords, and remained there nearly four hours. There were two important divisions that evening, and it was expected that the last would turn against the government; but he was too impatient to wait and see the result. "I entered," he says, "a little after five, and it was now past nine o'clock. I wanted to see it, and hope to see and hear the other House once; but if I were here often, I know it would weary my heart." It is evident that he felt thankful on his way home from this greatest council of the nation, that he was a preacher and not a peer, for he writes: "O thou blessed gospel! what healing and comforting doctrines are found in thee! Blessed be the Lord that I have been made acquainted with these truths, and that I am permitted to speak to others, according to the talent which the Lord has given me, of the unsearchable riches of Christ. O how thankful I feel that God has put me in the ministry! I have seen more of the world and its splendour during these



last weeks than I ever saw before; and though I feel no disposition to quarrel with those who are elevated to its high stations, or with those who are called to manage the affairs of the country, who, no doubt, have difficulties enough to contend with, yet I am ready to say with Solomon, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.' 'The world is passing away, but the word of the Lord abideth for ever.'"

Before the period of his engagement at Spafelds had proceeded far, he had become acquainted with a number of the people, and was able to discharge his ministry with more pleasure to himself. One Sabbath afternoon several of the attendants called on him, and said that the discourse which he had delivered in the morning had been much blessed to them. "I begin to think," he says, "that there are many among the Spafelds people who love the truth in its simplicity, though at first sight they appear distant and cold."

The six weeks passed on the whole comfortably. Several times he "felt great liberty in preaching, and many of the people seemed impressed by the word." He reached Swansea on his way home on Thursday evening, Sept. 24th. Next morning he hastened towards Burry Green, to see once more his "little family" and his "little room," where he "found all well and comfortable, and had a very good society in the evening at Bethesda."

## CHAPTER XI.

Report of the cause—new trials—long suspense—voluminous correspondence—happy termination.

DURING the twelve years in which Mr. Griffiths received a salary from Lord Barham, he was in the habit of sending occasionally to his Lordship a report of his labours, and of the progress of the cause under his charge. We place the following before our readers as an example:—

*“Bethesda Chapel, June 20, 1825.*

“MY LORD,—I take the liberty to write a few lines to acquaint your Lordship with our proceedings; and I only wish I had some fresh conquest over the kingdom of darkness to report. Indeed I trust the interest of our dear Redeemer is advancing amongst us. There are many deeply impressed now and then under the word, who are not decidedly on the Lord’s side; and many that love to hear, halt between two opinions about taking up the cross, and following Jesus. Some of the old professors are evidently growing in grace. Love and harmony prevail in our little camp, and the prophet’s words are, I trust, in some measure verified. ‘The envy of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off. Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.’

“Yet poor Gower is still, as a land at large, very barren in regard to vital godliness. The people are very indifferent to their eternal concerns. They are much like the hearers of Ezekiel: ‘They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people.....and lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely

song of one that hath a pleasant voice.....for they hear thy words, but they do them not.'

"This, my Lord, calls for double exertion, for more faith to believe the promises, the sweet and sure promises of the gospel, more fervent prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, without whom there is no possessing of the strong man armed,—more patience to wait the Lord's time; yet to wait with firm reliance through the mediation and intercession of our blessed Redeemer.

"In regard to the means, I am following the same plan I before stated to your Lordship. I preach once every Sabbath at Bethesda, and every third Sabbath twice; once every other Sabbath at Trinity, and once at Old Walls, a little place about two miles north of Bethesda. We have a very good attendance at each place, particularly on Sabbath evenings, when we are always crowded. Sabbath morning services at Bethesda are rather thin, so also is the week preaching in that neighbourhood; in the other villages it is well attended. We have two Sunday Schools, one at Bethesda, and one at Trinity. They go on pretty well, but are not so numerously attended now in the summer as they were in the winter, owing to most of the children in country places looking after cattle, sheep, &c. We have our sacrament on the first Sabbath of every month at Bethesda, and private meetings for experience once every week at the same place. The number of communicants on our church book is now forty-seven. Tho' most of them are poor in this world, I am happy to say I am fully persuaded of the real piety of the greater number of them, and that many of them will be a crown of rejoicing to my late beloved Patroness in the day of Christ as the first means, under God, of supplying them with gospel light.

"How wonderfully mysterious are the ways of God! What different instruments, and different ways of employing them in his vineyard! At one time a little captive girl in the land of Syria is employed to bring a nobleman to the prophet that is in Israel, and no doubt savingly to believe in the God of Israel; at another, a noble eunuch in his chariot, by the ministry of an apostle, is made a partaker of the heavenly call, which works so effectually upon him, that according to general opinion, as soon as he reaches home, he fills his own country with the name of Jesus Christ, and is the means of establishing his cause in the land.

"This, indeed, is honor enough to those whom God in his providence has made the honorable of the earth; nay, it is their exulting joy, and will be their everlasting dignity. And what shall I say? the poor are admitted partakers in this great privilege, that the whole glory may be of God. And oh! what shouts of glory when all these shall meet above, meet for eternity—meet to recount the wonders of the way, of the Providence and grace that brought them there!

"My Lord, I beg pardon for giving vent to my heart. May the same Spirit rest upon you, dwell with you and your worthy lady, and every branch of your honorable family!

"Excuse the freedom of an unworthy servant of Christ who asks an interest in your prayers, one who stands in daily need of the prayers of all saints, and subscribes himself, my Lord, with Christian regards,

"Your most humble servant,

"WM. GRIFFITHS."

All was going forward peaceably, and to some extent prosperously. The fortnightly rounds were taken, subjects were prepared, the schools

were catechized, and although there was no very marked progress achieved, it was manifest that the good cause was gaining ground. But in the year 1837 a change came over Lord Barham's mind, which for a time threatened to result in consequences most painful to the mind of Mr. G., and disastrous to the cause in Gower. His Lordship's solicitor, J. Bridges, Esq., was instructed to send the following letter:—

*“Red Lion Square, April, 1837.”*

“DEAR SIR,—Lord Barham has, for a considerable time, meditated some change in reference to the chapel for certain services in which he has long paid you a salary—considering that since there has been a faithful minister in the church, he as a faithful steward might expend the money for a somewhat similar object in some other sphere. You must be satisfied of this, and are frequently able to leave what is now such a limited charge. His Lordship has therefore desired me to say that after this year it will be better for you to give yourself more entirely to other objects, where you may be more extensively useful. You are probably prepared for some such intimation by the long silence Lord B. has maintained. He was unwilling to come to this decision, which has not been forwarded by anything his brother-in-law has said, who speaks of you with Christian kindness.—With best wishes,

“Yours faithfully,

“JOHN BRIDGES.”

Mr. Griffiths received this letter on the 3rd of May; and he thus refers to it in his diary:—“I feel indeed very keenly the thought of leaving

the dear people of my charge, and the field where I have now laboured for upwards of twenty years, and where I hoped to be permitted to end my days." Next day he writes: "Was unable to sleep the whole of last night, in consequence of the notice from Lord Barham. This is the greatest trial that I have met with since 1823, when I was turned out of Immanuel Chapel. But that event was blessed to my soul, in weaning my affections from earthly things, and bringing me to make the Lord alone my hiding place. It was blessed also to rouse the church to more earnest prayer; and many were turned from darkness to light after that trial. I try to believe that this unexpected event will work some similar good. My faith indeed is very weak, and the future is filled with uncertainty. My situation is different to what it was at my former trial; then I was single, now I have a family to provide for. I have also been longer in the country, and feel myself more attached to it. The people also are attached to me; and it grieves me to think of their distress, if I must leave them. O for faith and holy resignation to the divine will! The Lord will provide."

The following paper was drawn up by the deacons of the church, and sent to Mr. Bridges, with a request that he would bring it under the notice of Lord Barham:—

"SIR,—It is with no small degree of surprise and pain that our revered and laborious pastor has laid before us your letter, conveying the intelligence of Lord Barham's determination to withhold the usual support which he has so nobly and generously afforded him for some years past. It is not for us to enquire into the motives by which his Lordship's mind has been influenced, nor yet for a single moment to call in question their purity; still we feel it a duty, as officers of the church at Bethesda Chapel, to state most respectfully, yet most firmly, that his removal from his labours will be identified with the most painful results to the cause of Christ in Gower.

"We think that your letter is rather indefinite as to the cause of Mr. G's removal. The only thing which at all approaches to a charge is, that he has sometimes laboured in other scenes of Christian operation; but this, we beg leave to say, has been with the entire concurrence and sanction of Lord Barham, *as it was agreed upon when he accepted the charge at Bethesda Chapel*, as the enclosed documents will prove. It appears, too, that his Lordship imagines that, because the gospel is preached in the Established Church, the people who attend Bethesda may attend there; but we, as Dissenters, and being so before the commencement of the cause at Bethesda, while we sincerely rejoice that the gospel is preached in the church, yet cannot conscientiously attend it.

"Allow us now to advert to the circumstances which would render his removal extremely painful.

"His labours have been owned by the Great Head of the church, both in the conversion of sinners and the edification of saints; indeed, those who know him most possess the deepest conviction that his labours have been abundant and self-denying, and that his only

object in those labours has been the glory of his exalted Master.

“The different aspect which the cause at Bethesda Chapel exhibits now to what it did when he first commenced his labours amongst us, is a sufficient testimony to the success of his labours. There are in communion at Bethesda between sixty and seventy members, all of whom, with the exception of eight old members, have been gathered into the church of Christ under his ministry, as our church book will shew. Besides this, his ministry has been most honoured in the villages and hamlets of the vicinity around; and may we be allowed to add that his blameless and holy life has imparted efficiency to the holy doctrines he has preached. We feel persuaded that he has walked worthy of his high vocation as a Christian, and of his high and distinguished office as a minister.

“The attachment between him and the people has been, and still is, reciprocal. The idea of separation has been painful to him, and it will be keenly painful to them when it is communicated. We have cherished the fond hope of living together in Christian friendship till death, and the still fonder hope of meeting in the spacious mansions of eternity, to exemplify towards each other the endearing reciprocities of a perfect and uninterrupted friendship for ever and ever; and that such a hope might be realised, Mr. G. has refused on his part a much more lucrative station.

“In addition to all this, he has been with us for upwards of twenty years, a period sufficiently long in the life of man to rivet his attachment to the people amongst whom he has laboured, and to the attractions of his home and his neighbourhood.

“We would not presume to dictate to his Lordship; we are also quite aware that he is under no obligation



to continue the support he has so kindly afforded; still, could anything be done to avert the painful separation between us, we should most sincerely rejoice, and feel thankful first of all to the Giver of all good, and then to those who at all contributed to perpetuate the union between us.

"Begging you to lay this communication before his Lordship, and the favor of an early reply,

"We are, sir,

"Your humble obedient servants,

"WM. VOSS,	} Deacons of Bethesda."
"GEO. JENKINS,	
"JOHN MACK,	
"RICHARD DAVIES,	

Mr. Griffiths wrote himself, and several kind friends who took an interest in his welfare, and in that of the cause in Gower, addressed earnest representations to his Lordship through Mr. Bridges, and the following letter was the result:—

*"Red Lion Square, July 6, 1837.*

"DEAR SIR,—The several letters you sent me were transmitted to Lord Barham, and the subsequent letter written by Mr. Smith while last in London. They have occasioned his Lordship unfeigned anxiety, and it is only exercising common charity and justice, where both are strictly due, and believe (what I know to be the case) that his Lordship has not come to this decision without much Christian consideration, and various communications with Christian friends, with a sincere desire to promote the cause of true religion which he has so much at heart.

"I have only just received his letter, with directions to inform you that he is willing to extend the period

of your stay at Bethesda until midsummer next, on the express understanding that you will consider this as final, and the period as the latest which would be allowed. If you can with convenience remove sooner, so much the better. Mr. Smith said he had the opportunity of providing for you more advantageously, which I was glad to hear of, firmly believing that your ministrations should be exercised in a far more extended vineyard, not only from the circumstance of your being for some weeks placed over a large congregation in London, but from what I have seen and heard of you. The very small church at Bethesda may be otherwise supplied.

"I will thank you to acknowledge this letter in such a reply as I may transmit to Lord Barham. You will now have a twelvemonth before you, and remove at the most convenient season.

"That the best of blessings may attend you is the cordial wish of Lord Barham, and of,

"Dear Sir, yours very faithfully,

"JOHN BRIDGES."

In reply to this last communication Mr. Griffiths wrote the following:—

*"Burry Green, July 17, 1837.*

"MY DEAR SIR,—I received your letter, in which Lord Barham is pleased to signify his willingness for me to continue at Bethesda till midsummer next for my convenience to remove, with the express understanding to consider that period as final.

"I beg respectfully to resign my salary and his Lordship's patronage at the end of the present year, according to the first notice. The people here have now come forward, and have offered to contribute their

utmost for my future support, and I have promised (by the Lord's help) to continue my ministry amongst them.

"We therefore beg the Christian favor, and we humbly make it in a Christian spirit, that his Lordship will not turn us out of the chapel and the chapel house, but allow us *at our own expense* to carry on the service of God as before, if his Lordship will be pleased gratuitously to send us at his pleasure some small sums to help us in keeping the premises in repair; but if not, we will engage to keep them ourselves. We will also submit to give up the premises at any future period, if any error in doctrine or failure in just discipline may creep in, such errors to be defined by some uncontroverted standard.

"I beg to assure his Lordship that I have only the welfare of Christ's kingdom in view in making the above proposal—neither ease nor emolument can result from it to me. I have not thought it right to ask this favor without first calling a public meeting at Bethesda, held on the 11th inst., in order, if possible, to learn the will of Providence. There were present at that meeting all the ministers of Lady Barham's other chapels, the minister of Lady Huntingdon's Chapel, Swansea, and two of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists' ministers from Swansea, the whole of the church belonging to Bethesda, and others belonging to other denominations. All seemed to concur in the present state of the question, that the above measure *ought to be tried* as the only one unexceptionable for both sides, and likely to further the success of the gospel in this country. Each of the above ministers allowed me to name them to Lord Barham for their individual sentiments on the subject.

"The following considerations will also help to show the reasonableness of the above request.

"1. The spiritual union formed by the gospel between

ministers and their people is of a very *sacred nature*, and sometimes cannot be dissolved without doing violence to the Christian feelings of both parties, not warranted in the word of God, particularly where that union has been formed by the blessing of God upon the minister's labours in the conversion of his charge, and rivetted by many years of sweet Christian fellowship in serving God.

"2. The whole people of my charge are anxiously pressing me to continue among them, and the public voice generally throughout the whole of Gower has reached me with the same earnest solicitation; therefore I cannot feel my conscience at liberty to leave the country.

"3. If I am forced to give up the chapel, a public motion has passed that all the members, and the generality of the hearers, will also leave it; but the old members and myself feel indeed very painfully on this head. We have been so long on the premises—there is a kind of religious association between us and the stones and timber of the building where we trust the Lord has often blessed us, and we are unwilling to see a new chapel erected in the neighbourhood, which *must be the case* if we lose the present house of God, because it is nearly in the centre of our people's habitations, who live scattered over eight miles circumference.

"4. One word in reply to the remarks in your letters. The church at Bethesda, though small, is not *so very small* but there is enough of work for me to do; and if I have sometimes left it, I took care it was not left without proper supplies of the people's choice. My labours will not altogether condemn me when I say, there are at this time, tho' few (68), more members at Bethesda than at any former period since it was built.

"Should Lord Barham think fit to allow me the use of the chapel *without salary*, please to write soon, that I may acquaint the people of it. It will prove a healing measure in the present agitation. If not, please to inform me, that I may look for another dwelling. I shall in the last case accept his Lordship's offer till next midsummer to have time to provide. I shall always cherish the highest Christian respect for his Lordship, and all Lady Barham's family. If no light will arise in this world to remove the present misunderstanding, we shall have it above in the land of perfection.

"I remain, my dear sir,

"Very respectfully yours,

"WM. GRIFFITHS."

No reply was received for several months, and during that time Mr. Griffiths and his people were kept in agonies of suspense. From July to December he ever alludes to the subject in his diary. Every day he expected an answer. He wondered why it did not come. He questioned in his mind what kind of answer it would be when it came. Would he be obliged to turn out of Bethesda Chapel? If so, what would he do? Leave his beloved Gower, or throw himself and his little family on Providence, as he had done with himself before? While in the height of this suspense, a door seemed to open for him to leave Gower. He received an invitation from the Rev. J. A. James, of Birmingham, to take the charge of a chapel that was then just built

in that town. But no; he could not think of turning his back upon his dear people while they were in such a crisis. He sent to Mr. James a respectful refusal, stating that he felt so much attached to Gower, that he could not leave it unless he was driven to do so by the want of support.

Meanwhile the subject that was uppermost in Mr. Griffiths's thoughts was still pending. The correspondence connected with it would fill up all our remaining space. We have long and earnest letters written by Robt. Smith, Esq., of Craigavon; we have letters written to and by the Rev. Mr. Lake of Worcester, who was on close terms of intimacy with Lord Barham. But we will trespass no longer on the patience of our readers. On the 22nd of December, a letter came from Mr. Bridges, stating that Lord Barham, while withdrawing the salary he had up to that time paid to Mr. Griffiths, consented that he and the people should continue to enjoy the use of the chapels. His Lordship received in a few days afterwards the grateful thanks of both minister and congregation.

Lord Barham continued to take an interest in the cause in Gower, as the following letter, written more than a year after the above events, will testify:—

*"1, Upper Harley St., Jan. 21, 1839.*

"DEAR SIR,—I have received your letter, and am very happy to hear so good a report of the concerns of the

Chapel at Burry's Green, and of the increase of religion amongst the members.

"I have the pleasure to enclose you £5 towards the painting, of which it stands in need, and also £5 for yourself.

"I am very sorry to hear of the illness of your little boy. I hope his knee is quite recovered, and that as he grows up he will be a comfort to his parents, and a true disciple of Christ.

"With my Christian regards to Mrs. Griffiths, in which Lady Barham joins,

"I remain, dear sir,

"Sincerely yours,

"BARHAM."

Mr. Griffiths held Lord Barham in great esteem, and was much gratified when his Lordship was created Earl of Gainsborough in August, 1841. The respect was mutual, and they continued to correspond with each other up to the time of Mr. Griffiths's decease. We have much pleasure in adding that his Lordship, at Mr. Griffiths's request, conveyed the chapels of Bethesda and Trinity to the Calvinistic Methodist Connexion freely and for ever. With the following letter from the pious nobleman, we will conclude the present chapter:—

*"Claridge's Hotel, Brook St., April 11, 1861.*

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have received your kind letter with much pleasure, and am happy to hear so favorable a report of your own and Mrs. Griffiths's health.

"At my very advanced age, I am thankful to make

a good report also of myself. Though I cannot but feel myself declining, I have also to praise the Lord for giving me so much freedom from distressing pain.

"Though I cannot speak of that assurance which is given to many of God's people, yet I hope I have an increasing desire to know the blessed Saviour, and to be 'found in Him.' I am sure I can have no hope but in his precious blood and righteousness.

"I saw my dear sister, Mrs. Thompson, last week; she was very well, and her dear husband also. I am happy to hear from her so good an account of the children of my dear sister, Mrs. Phillips. I hope they are all walking in the narrow way. How wonderful are the answers of the Lord to the prayers of his servants!

"It gives me great pleasure, my dear sir, to hear your report of the progress of the good cause in Gower. It must be a source of heartfelt joy to you also, that you have an assistant so much to your satisfaction.

"It is delightful to think how the work of God is prospering in the world. Surely the end cannot be far off. May we be ready for all events, and especially for the solemn hour of our own departure.

"I request, dear sir, for myself a continuance of your valued prayers, and remain,

"Your affectionate friend,

"GAINSBOROUGH."

I have the pleasure to request your acceptance of the enclosed trifle.




## CHAPTER XII.

## A chapter of birthday records.

WE have in a previous chapter incidentally stated that method and punctuality were among the most prominent features of Mr. Griffiths's character. The reason why he was able, with his feeble health and many disadvantages, to accomplish so much labour is, that he had appointed a time to do everything, and took care that everything should be done in its own time. He was never at a loss where to find anything. Never had he to lose a minute in tossing over papers, and rummaging drawers for a lost letter, or a missing sermon. Every book, every sermon, every "subject paper," and every letter, was as sure to be found in its own place as Arthur's Stone is on the Cefnybryn mountain. When we came to live in his neighbourhood, one of his first enquiries was, "Are you tidy? Let me see some of your manuscripts; are they numbered and dated?" While we write, we see before us a large brown paper parcel, containing some thousands of his sermons. On looking into his small diary, we see that on the 9th of November, 1845, he preached at Bethesda from Ezekiel xxxiii. 31, 32. 'Supposing before proceeding further we had a wish to read that sermon, we could find it in two minutes, for all the sermons

of each year are tied together in a smaller parcel by themselves, and each bearing the date on which it was written. We are anxious to know how he felt and how the people appeared while he was delivering it. We therefore turn to his large journal, and there we find an entry of a page and a half long, closely written, of which the following is an extract:—"The Lord was pleased to give me more than usual light and power, so that I was fully satisfied long before the conclusion of the service that I had been led to this subject by the direction of his Spirit. Although there was nothing extraordinary in what I advanced, there was a searching power going forth with it which made all to listen most attentively, while some hung down their heads, and shed floods of tears."

A friend tells us that some time between fifteen and twenty years ago he heard Mr. Griffiths preaching from a certain text at Brecon; and we can tell him at once that it was on the 27th of May, 1844, and that he slept that night at the house of Mrs. Watkins. There is a text-book to shew at a glance when each sermon was studied, there is the small diary to shew when and where it was delivered; there is the large diary to shew the feelings of the preacher, and the appearance of the hearers when it was delivered; and there is the sermon itself in its own place in the paper parcel, so that we could get



at it in a moment, and read it for ourselves. There are now lying before us ponderous volumes of manuscripts, containing entries for almost every day in the last forty-six years of his life. One of these volumes, extending over only six years, would furnish materials for a book at least twice as large as the one we are now engaged in writing. We therefore find it difficult to make a selection. There are his views and feelings with reference to his own spiritual state; with reference to the cause under his charge, as well as with regard to the general interests of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world. There are, however, annual retrospects written on every recurring birthday; and since these contain what every reader is most desirous to know—the history of his own life, and of the progress of the cause in which he laboured—we will allow a few of them to occupy the remainder of our present chapter.

“December 21st, 1838. Whenever I think of the divine goodness to such an unworthy and ungrateful sinner as I am, my soul is humbled within me. My first thought when I awoke this morning was the return of my birthday. Behold, O my soul, the exceeding goodness of God—the constant supplies of his providence and grace! I am this morning fifty years of age; have lived half a century in this world! How many souls during this period have left it—

left it in ignorance of their lost condition, and perished for ever without hope! How many more are still living, and have arrived at my age, but have no religion, nor any serious concern about their future state! While I write I feel thankful to Him who thirty years ago opened my eyes to see my ruined condition, and, I trust, made me a new creature in Christ Jesus; and afterwards saw fit to employ me as a messenger of the gospel of peace,—has delivered me from the snares of sin, Satan, and the world, to this present day, and has overruled for my good all the trying events which have passed over my head.

“In taking a retrospect of the past year, I see many things which call for gratitude. In temporal matters all has been well. God has continued our health as a family. The means of my support have been fully made up, though the whole of my usual salary was withdrawn at the beginning of this year. The people have been hitherto faithful in their contributions to the cause, and I am likely to be better off in this respect at the close of the year than at any former period. O that this might cure me of all mistrust in Providence for the future. I was a believer at the beginning of the year; but I must confess that I was a very weak believer while the cloud continued over my prospects; and even now my unbelief often torments my soul by

whispering, 'This new mode of supply will fail, and the people will get weary in bringing it.' Where then, is the Lord to go? Is it not He that now moves the people to support his cause? Is He unable or unwilling to continue that control over their minds? O my soul, rest in him, and in him alone!

"The best feature of this year is the increase of our church in numbers and in piety. We have received several new members, and among them some heads of families. I rejoice that this little increase makes some addition to the very few praying households in the country.

"I pray for a revival of religion in myself and in the church under my care. I have lately used all the arguments I could think of to impress this subject on the minds of our people. I feel my outward man decaying considerably. My eyesight and hearing fail, my limbs are full of weariness, my spirits are often low; but the prospect beyond the river is very inviting. May the Lord keep me faithful unto death, and then give me the crown of life!"

We pass over several years, for unhappily our remaining space admonishes us that many must be dealt with in the same manner, and come to an entry which contains a retrospect of his whole life up to that time.

"December 21st, 1846. I am spared to see

another of my birthdays. By the mercy of God my life has been prolonged fifty-eight years. I look back to the days of my youth, and they appear as yesterday; but many great events have taken place in the world since that time. I have lived either for good or for evil all these days. How have I lived? To whom have I lived? To what purpose has my life been thus prolonged? Let me now set about these enquiries with all the solemnity and sincerity of which I am capable. My life naturally divides itself into two portions. For the first twenty years I lived without religion, and for the last thirty-eight I have been in the house of God. For thirty-three years I have been a preacher of God's holy word, and thirty of these have been spent in this country. With regard to the first part, I can only wonder at the forbearance of God, who not only spared me, but likewise followed me with frequent convictions after I had so often sinned them away, and tempted him to leave me. I was a cumberer of the ground, but there was an Advocate with the Father, who said, 'Spare him a little longer;' and I was spared until I was humbled and brought into his house. Since I have been a minister of the gospel, by the grace of God I have laboured constantly and extensively in his cause. Though I have been far short of what I ought to be, and what I wish to be, yet my conscience tells me that I have lived to God, and not to

myself, and that by his blessing I have lived in some small measure to the benefit of my fellow-creatures.

"The cause in Gower, though low, has not been this year without some progress. We have received several new members. Our Sabbath Schools seem to maintain their ground, and the young people here made considerable progress in learning the scriptures. We sow in hope, expecting the fulfilment of the blessed promise—the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This is much, very much needed here. I frequently pray for this blessing. I look upon the little church with which I am connected, and there I see the want of more life and zeal. I look upon the world around, and there I see the dry bones scattered over the open valley. I cry out, 'O breath, come from the four winds;' yet see but little prospect of better times. Still I am enabled to stand upon the watch-tower, and wait to see what the Lord will do. If I shall not live to see the river of life rising to swimming waters in this country, others shall see it. Let me have grace to be faithful unto death, that I may finish my course with joy. One of my family—my eldest sister—has lately finished her pilgrimage, after forty-three years of faithful service in the Lord's vineyard. She is the first of us to join our pious parents in the world of light; and hers is the first death for forty-two years in our family

circle. The remnant of us are all in the church below. O may we all unite with them above!"

"December 21st, 1852. To day I am sixty-four years of age. 'Goodness and mercy have surely followed me all the days of my life.' Both in his providence and in his grace the Lord has been, and continues to be very merciful unto me, and every year seems to bring renewed evidences of his lovingkindness. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.' Hitherto the Lord has not only preserved me in life, but has also made life pleasant to me. Not only has he preserved me as a member of his family, and a minister of his word, but he has also made my soul of late years more alive to my personal interest in his Son, and has, to a certain extent, given me the witness of the Spirit, that I am a child of God, and shall not come to condemnation, but shall inherit eternal life. I am frequently looking into this great question with all sincerity, and with prayer for the Divine guidance; and the conclusion that I generally arrive at is this, By the grace of God I am saved. I am born of the Spirit, and have my affections and heart set on things above. I shall not be lost in the perdition of the wicked. I shall not be turned into hell with those who forget God. I shall not be shut out with the foolish virgins at the mid-



night cry; but shall by free and sovereign love, through the sacrifice of Christ alone, and by the saving and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in my soul, enter into the joy of my Lord, and unite with the whole ransomed church of God, to praise him for ever and ever. This is my general experience. On the other hand, my conflict with sin is not less severe, nor my feeling of inward depravity less painful. I frequently find my heart so dead, and my thoughts so earthly and wandering in prayer, that I am obliged to pause in shame and silence, not venturing to utter more words, till I can recall my wandering mind into a sense of the *holy presence* of Him before whom I bend my knees."

"December 21st, 1856. This is my birthday, and the Lord's day. I have lived to complete my sixty-eighth year, and now enter on my sixty-ninth. This Sabbath has been a trying one to me, owing to failure of health. I made an effort to preach at Bethesda in the forenoon, but owing to a very bad cold, I found much difficulty in speaking. I have been obliged to give up the thought of going to Ebenezer (Old Walls) this evening, being persuaded by my friends that it is not safe for me to go. I regret the failure exceedingly, as I had a strong desire to meet the congregation at that place. The Lord knows what is best for me, and he has promised to order all my steps. I therefore try to hold

private communion with Him in my little room. In the retrospect of this year I feel thankful that, by the Lord's grace, I have enjoyed more freedom in prayer, more pleasure in studying, and more comfort in the pulpit, than in any of my former years. I trust that I feel a desire to praise his name. There is nothing new in the aspect of this church. My former complaints of want of success in the manifest conversion of souls could now be repeated. But to write these complaints, though the writing is only intended for my own eye, would not answer any good purpose. The Lord has appointed a certain work for me to perform, and a certain time to labour in his cause; and his work demands all the powers and affections of my soul to perform it industriously and faithfully. I want to pray much for wisdom, humility, and zeal, that in all things I may be enabled to please Him who has chosen me to be a soldier of the cross. Though in some sense all years are pretty much the same, each one in other respects opens some new chapters concerning those who live to its close, as well as those who die during its progress. I have new lessons to ponder, and I should learn to order my steps according as time interprets the vision before me. That which I once thought of some individuals, I cannot think now; but the gospel is the same, Christ is the same, and my duty the same. By his grace I shall continue stedfast

and unmoveable even unto the end. My domestic comforts are regular and abundant. All that I want is spiritual advancement."

We have repeatedly adverted to Mr. Griffiths's bodily infirmities. It is not too much to say that he never enjoyed robust health. From his youth he was afflicted with an asthmatic affection. In the earliest records in his diary, which was commenced when he was in his twenty-seventh year, there is now and then an allusion to "this painful asthma." Before he was fifty he felt that he was growing old, and he spent his whole life under the impression that the time of his dissolution was drawing nigh. We were told by some of his Penclawdd friends, among whom he spent the first three months of his residence in Gower, that from the time they first knew him he was only waiting for death. That he should continue to live seventy years and beyond was to himself a subject of astonishment. Dr. Watts expresses his wonder that "a harp of a thousand strings should keep in tune so long;" but in addition to the thousand strings, there were in his case to enhance the wonder not much fewer than a thousand infirmities. He was under this impression when he wrote the following.

"December 21, 1858. My birthday has once more arrived, and finds me still in the body. I am still permitted to continue my labours in Christ's vineyard; and by his goodness I have

been enabled to work somewhat more abundantly during this last year than the preceding, though I have daily evidences in this feeble frame that its inward pins are loosening more and more every year. I find it more difficult on that account to go far from home, still I am thankful that my immediate sphere of labour has not been curtailed, and that my usefulness as an humble instrument in the Spirit's hand has not been lessened. I have lived seventy years in the world; have laboured forty-two in Gower, and have lived thirty-four in the house where I now write this. Though always weak and rather unwell in body, I have not at any time been laid aside. I believe I have not been one whole Sabbath disengaged or out of the pulpit during the last year, nor, indeed, for several years past. I am under renewed obligations this day to raise my Ebenezer of praise to the great Father of all mercies. I am likewise under fresh obligations to examine myself—to enquire how my inward as well as my outward man has been employed during the past year, and to ascertain whether I have advanced in personal holiness and meetness for heaven. With regard to the cause of the Redeemer, I have nothing new to write. This year has been much like those which have gone before it. The want of increase in our church gives me much daily concern, and keeps my soul a humble suppliant at the throne of grace. I trust also that it makes me more

earnest in my public ministry. Though cast down, I am not in despair. My chief object should be to prove faithful unto God and men, to be a workman who needeth not be ashamed, and finish my course with joy. With this resolution I shall drop my pen, and wait patiently for the coming of the Lord."

We will close this chapter with the last of these interesting records that he was permitted to write.

"December 21st, 1860. My birthday has once more returned. By the tender care and providence of God I begin this morning my seventy-third year, and I feel anxious to consecrate myself, soul and body, with all that I possess, anew to the Lord, to be his servant while I am in this world, and to have the great favour of serving him for ever without my present imperfections, in the world that is to come. I am not without hope that it shall be so.

"The kind hand of Providence is wonderfully visible in continuing and increasing my earthly comforts, and also in assisting me hitherto to labour extensively in the gospel. I have not been out of the pulpit any one Sabbath during the whole of this year; and have kept up preaching on week evenings at all our out-stations. Now that a young minister has come to assist me, these can be more fully and regularly supplied. My family affairs are also comfortable. My dear

wife is in good health, and always taking from me all cares about domestic concerns. Our son and his wife and child are well, and doing well. All this calls for grateful thanksgiving. And what is still more, the Lord has been pleased to visit his cause amongst us by adding more new members than have ever been received in Gower before in any one year. The present aspect of our church is better than on any one of my previous birthdays during the whole forty-four years that I have laboured in this country. But I am also sensible that the time of my departure is drawing nigh. 'Yet a little while and he that cometh will come and not tarry.' It will be a happy change—to change mortality for immortality—the war for the victory.

"The little remainder of my time I wish to rest entirely upon the arm of infinite power, infinite wisdom, and infinite love. I am not always free from the fear of death; and am sometimes solicitous about the manner in which it may please my heavenly Father to send it. Of course I wish it to be clear and calm; but in this I desire to lie passively in God's hand. He knows what is best. Only let me labour diligently, that it may not be sent under any frown; and that I may die under a sense of Divine reconciliation, and enter into rest."

This was his last birthday on earth. When the next came it found him in heaven.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Attachment to Gower—Monthly Meetings and Associations  
—preaching tours in South Wales—journeys to North  
Wales, Liverpool, and Manchester.

WE have had sufficient evidence of Mr. Griffiths's attachment to the district in which he had been called to labour. The troubles he had during the first years of his residence there, and the pressing invitations he had to other spheres of labour, would have made almost every one believe that it was the will of Providence that he should remove out of it; but so firmly did he believe that it was the field in which the Lord had ordained that he should labour, that no trouble from within or invitation from without could induce him for one moment to entertain the idea of quitting it. In the very early part of his residence there he was for a short time troubled with such thoughts as the following:—"Here I am in an obscure out-of-the-way place. Here I have no opportunity to come into contact with great minds. There is nothing here to stimulate talent, nothing to draw it out; and if it came out, there is no one to appreciate it. If I were in a more public place, I might become a greater man, and so much the more useful." He had not long, however, indulged in these cogitations before he discovered that they were suggested by the evil one. "They are the tactics of Satan,"

he immediately writes; and that which convinced him that they owed their origin to that wicked source was the fact that their tendency was to drive him out of Gower. The apostle Paul was not more sure that the Lord had called him to preach in Macedonia, than Mr. Griffiths was that the same Lord had called him to labour in Gower. "I believe that this is the field which has been given unto me of the Lord," was the first article in his creed on this subject; and all the rest followed as a matter of course. But it was not in Gower alone that he was known and appreciated, nor was it that district only that profited by his ministrations. He was one of the most constant attendants at the Monthly Meetings of his county, and the Associations of South Wales. We take up his day-book, and run our eye over three years taken at random; and find that during that time he had attended eight Associations, eighteen Monthly Meetings, and ten other Public Meetings, Chapel Openings, and Anniversaries, some at a considerable distance, and all beyond the limits of his immediate field of labour. His presence at those meetings, where the general affairs of the Connexion were transacted, was highly valuable, for like one of whom we read among the servants of David, "he was a wise man and a counsellor."

We never knew a better adviser on religious subjects than Mr. Griffiths, for his heart was full



of zeal for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, and that zeal was guided by vast religious knowledge and experience, and a large amount of common sense. His advice was not hastily given, for his conclusions were not hastily formed. He took time deliberately to examine a question in all its bearings; and when once he had made up his mind, he was not easily shaken. In those meetings which were held for conversation on experimental religion, he invariably took a very prominent part. The perusal of his diary at once reveals the secret of his skill in spiritual anatomy, for there we find that much of his time was spent in analyzing himself.

He generally preached in several places on his way to and from these public assemblies. He had no idea of staying for a night at any place, without either giving them a sermon or attending their "society meeting." In addition to this, he was in the habit of devoting a month or five weeks in each year to a preaching tour in some part of South Wales. These visits to the churches were always welcome; and in those families with whom he usually stayed he was a favourite guest. He made himself at home wherever he went, and soon his host and all the family circle felt at home with him. His attentions were not confined to the heads of the house, but he always had something to say to the children and servants. It was quite a treat to spend an evening in his

company, for though he never verged on levity, he was always full of good humour, and made all around him, unless there were some fault in themselves, to feel cheerful and happy. He had enough to say, so that no one need be in any anxiety on that subject for himself; and what he said was always entertaining. Perhaps he would bring up some reminiscences of his soldier life, quite a favourite topic; perhaps he would relate some anecdotes of his early residence in Gower, or of the sayings and doings of "men he had known." Generally there would be something to provoke a smile, and occasionally a good hearty laugh; but there was nothing to disqualify the company for the worship that was to follow, or to unfit himself for closer communion with his God before retiring to rest.

These preaching excursions were, until quite late in his life, confined to South Wales. Our readers will remember that he was discharged from his military service at Manchester, and that he travelled from thence to Bala on his way home in company with the Rev. John Elias. It is a somewhat remarkable fact that he never afterwards visited the North until he was comparatively an old man. It was in the year 1848 that he first visited Liverpool and Manchester, with some parts of North Wales. We have a very minute account of this tour, with its labours and adven-

tures, in his diary. Before leaving his room to commence his journey he writes—

“I am just setting out for Swansea, beginning my way to Liverpool, &c. I have no expectation to see this room again in less than five weeks. What changes will take place before that time the Lord only knows. Let him do that which seemeth good in his sight. I feel willing from the heart to resign myself, my family, and my every concern, both spiritual and temporal, into his gracious hands; only I feel very anxious that he may keep me daily watchful, lest I quench or grieve his Holy Spirit, and that he may not hide his face from me, whether I be in life or in death. O Lord, go with him who is now going, and remain with them who are left behind.”

Next day he took the steamer at Swansea for Liverpool, and had a pleasant voyage. On the second day it was specially so. “The weather was fine,” he writes, “and the company cheerful, though it was a day lost; as to any employment, I could neither read, write, nor think to any useful purpose.” Having reached Liverpool, and while he was admiring its forest of shipping, he heard some one shouting among the bustling crowd on the shore, “Is there a Mr. Griffiths on board?” to which he immediately answered, “I am he.” The enquirer was the kind gentleman at whose house he was to stay, and of whom he wrote the next day that he was “an excellent

man, and had four amiable children, the oldest of whom was fifteen years of age." The following day he felt rather depressed and anxious, lest he should be unable to satisfy the people to whom he had come from such a distance to preach; but checking himself he asked, "Why not turn away from man—from all men, to God? Where are my deep fears of displeasing him? O let me endeavour to cultivate a devout and humble spirit, and pass through every crowd to Christ, that I may receive virtue from him."

Every preacher who has spent a few weeks at Liverpool knows by experience that the position of a supply there is no sinecure. It is unceasing and incessant work. The word of command that issues from the head quarters at Frazer street keeps one continually on the march. Unless he is thoroughly prepared with a good number of sermons, he will find himself in a painful predicament, for he must preach three times each Sabbath, and two or three times in the week, besides attending societies and other meetings; while the kind hospitality of the loving friends there leaves him but little time for meditation. Mr. Griffiths went through the whole round of preaching, exhorting, and visiting expected from a "strange preacher," and was exceedingly glad when he could now and then snatch an hour or two for study. He much enjoyed his work at Liverpool, and admired the energy with which the

friends there were carrying on the cause of Christ. He went from Liverpool to Manchester, where he stayed five days, preached five times, and attended two other meetings. From thence he returned by Runcorn, where he preached and spent the night; and after spending five more days, and preaching five more sermons at Liverpool, he crossed by steamer into Anglesea, and preached in several places there on his way to the Association at Carnarvon. Writing of this tour in North Wales he says:—"I spent eight days preaching partly in Anglesea and partly in Carnarvonshire, all in the neighbourhood of Menai Bridge, and in attending the Carnarvon Association. I went down with a heavy heart and low spirits, in view of the services which I had to perform. I felt my weakness and insufficiency, but had more than usual help from above each time I preached, and especially so at the Association. The fear of man was quite removed from me. I prayed for help in this time of need. I prayed for wisdom, courage, and humility. I prayed that I might honour the ministry before the thousands, and still not seek my own glory, but the glory of Him whose servant I am; and it pleased the Lord to listen to and answer my prayer. I never before preached to such large congregations as at Carnarvon and Bangor, and never in my life felt better in the pulpit. This indeed is a great favour to a sinner, much of whose time is spent

in secret wanderings of heart from God. I now feel the word of God very precious, the throne of grace very refreshing, and feel renewed love to God as my Father in Christ."

Three years later he went over pretty much the same ground; and he paid two visits more to Liverpool, one in 1855, and the other in 1858. Each time he left his home with many fears and misgivings; but each time he was helped by his gracious Master far beyond his expectations, and well received by the brethren. Returning from Liverpool the last time, he spent a Sabbath at Chester, of which he writes—

"I preached morning and evening to the Welsh people. I enjoyed much freedom and enlargement of soul in the morning service. In the evening we had a comfortable meeting; but not equal to the forenoon service. This being my first, and more than probably my last Sabbath at this place, I feel truly thankful that the Lord has been pleased to stand by me all day, though in a very weak state of bodily health. When shall my whole soul feel the constant obligations under which I am laid to love and to serve my blessed Redeemer! I am often longing for a more holy and heavenly state of affections, and for being delivered from my frequent relapses into a cold and stupid frame of soul. Without constant fighting there is no victory."

With an extract from that which he wrote

in his diary after returning from the last of these journeys, we will bring this chapter to a close.

"September 4th, 1858. I reached my happy home this forenoon, after having been away three weeks and four days. I visited Liverpool, Runcorn, Manchester, and Chester. Spent two Sabbaths at the first place, one at the last, and two week days at each of the other towns. I preached also at Swansea, Newport, and Shrewsbury, in going and returning. The Lord was indeed very kind to me throughout this journey. I suffered more or less during the whole time from bodily ailments, but my spirits have generally felt refreshed; and the kindness of Christian friends towards me everywhere was abundant. The word of the Lord, while I was preaching it, was precious to my own soul, and I trust that good has been done to the souls of the people. I feel thankful for this excursion from home, although it was undertaken in much fear. May the Lord grant me renewed faith and love, to serve him at home with zeal and diligence for the short remainder of my days."

## CHAPTER XII.

A testimonial, and its presentation.

WE were about to commence this chapter with an exceedingly common-place remark. We were on the point of telling our readers that this world of ours is a very changeable one. They are all, however, pretty well acquainted with that fact, and therefore we need not enlarge upon it. Mr. Griffiths lived long enough to see a great change in the tastes, feelings, and habits of the religious world. He began his ministry at a time when it was considered of the last importance that the preacher should have no ground to suspect that he was thought well of by any man on the face of the earth. It was thought that any commendation bestowed upon the servant was an offence against the Master, inasmuch as it was giving to man that honour which only belongs to God. Of course people might think well of him, might think him a good, useful, and even great preacher; but they must not tell it. What if the report were by any chance to reach his ears? Would he not be in danger of being puffed up, and of falling into the snares of the evil one? No, preachers, and especially young preachers, must be kept humble; and it was thought nothing could so effectually answer that purpose as to give them as little pay as possible, and no praise



at all. In fact, it was considered that a little rough handling would do them good. They had monitors among the masses, whose special province it was to keep down their pride. When one of these had "spoken a little truth," that is, spoken impertinently to a preacher, he felt a vast amount of self-satisfaction, thinking that he had shown great boldness, and had done good service. There are extremes on either hand. The effect of men's commendations on those who deserve them, is to encourage them in their work, and to make them more humble and grateful. Paul writing to the Philippians spoke of Timothy in terms of the highest approbation: "For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state;" and we have no evidence that he gave them secret instructions not to mention this to him when he came among them, lest the young preacher "should be exalted above measure." Mr. Griffiths lived to see the time when it is not considered wrong to encourage a minister of the gospel with kind words, as well as with more substantial evidences of the esteem in which he is held among his people. For a long series of years he occupied a large place in the affections of the people of Gower. When he was dismissed from Immanuel Chapel, they had rallied round him, had followed him to more humble edifices, and had subscribed towards his support. When in 1837 he received notice to

leave Bethesda Chapel, he was unmistakeably given to understand that if out he must go, the people to a man would go out with him. We remember a young clergyman coming into Gower, who at the outset taught the doctrine of apostolical succession. We were told that he was soon compelled to make an exception in favour of Mr. Griffiths, for the Gower people could not be induced to receive anything from the mouth of a man, as long as he persisted in teaching that which implied that their favourite minister had no right to preach the gospel. They could not contradict that which was said about the links of the chain, nor argue on the respective merits of episcopal and other ordinations; but they were certain of one thing, and it was this, that Mr. Griffiths was a true minister of the New Testament.

As his life was drawing towards its close, they began seriously to think that they ought to take to themselves the pleasure, and do him the honour of presenting him with a testimonial of their esteem for him. We believe that the first who moved in this matter were his two friends, Mr. William Voss of Nicholastone, and Mr. George Gower of Killibion Farm, both of whom have already followed him to the grave. They were heartily seconded by his other deacons, Mr. George Jenkins and Mr. John Mack, as well as by the Rev. W. J. Ford of Pilton Green. The

thing was no sooner mentioned than it took and spread, and in a short time a handsome sum was subscribed. It was resolved that the greater part of the money should be expended on a superior portrait of Mr. Griffiths, to execute which an eminent artist was brought from London. His feelings on this subject may be gathered from the following extracts from his diary:—

“October 26, 1858. These people intend to honour me before I die with a testimonial of their esteem for me as an old servant of forty-two years in this field of gospel labour. It has sprung up entirely amongst themselves. I never coveted it, or even thought of it. Still I feel grateful, as I ought to feel, that Providence has enabled me so long to fulfil my mission, and not to forfeit the esteem and the affection of the people.”

“December 3rd. I have had notice from the testimonial committee to hold myself in readiness to receive some gentleman from London, an artist whom they have engaged to paint my portrait. I did not desire it, nor did I know anything of the first movement; but I must try now to submit to it with as good a grace as I can.”

“December 11th. This has been in one sense an eventful week in my short life. Mr. Burton, the artist, came down from London last Saturday, and has been here all the week painting my portrait. I have sat five or six times in the course of the week; and it is now nearly finished.

I have neither joy nor sorrow in respect to it, though I think it will be a fine piece of workmanship. It was the people's wish to have it, and not mine. The artist is an agreeable and religious man, which makes his society pleasant to us. He will stay here another week, to paint the likeness of my dear wife. At first she was rather averse to it; but I felt that as mine is done, I should not be happy without having hers likewise. This, however, is our own private affair."

"December 23rd. Mr Burton left this afternoon for Nottingham, to spend the Christmas holidays with his aged parents there. He was here nearly three weeks, very happy, comfortable, and social in his manner. I still think it almost sinful to fetch a man from London, and pay so much money for painting the picture of poor mortal flesh that must soon mingle with earth. I think I feel no vanity on the subject, but rather a kind of secret regret that I did not oppose it; but then I had no opportunity to do so, for I knew not what the committee were going to offer me before the whole thing was settled; and I could not speak against it now without appearing to be what I am not—destitute of grateful feelings, and incapable of appreciating the kind esteem of the public. Therefore I will say no more about it until I must at the public presentation."

That public presentation was a great event.

It took place on the 8th of June, 1859, the day of the annual meeting at Bethesda Chapel. These yearly gatherings are much thought of in Gower, and have gone on increasing in interest and in the number of attendants upon them ever since we first knew them. But this was made more than usually important by the interesting ceremonial that was to take place in connection with it. Thos. Thompson, Esq., with his estimable lady, the Honourable Mrs. Thompson (daughter of the late Lady Barham) came down from Bath to be present on the occasion.

We never in our lives witnessed a more pleasing scene. Mr. Griffiths sat in the pulpit pew, in the midst of a large number of brethren and friends; his large and life-like portrait hanging against the pulpit, and facing the enormous crowd. While Mr. Thompson, the chairman, delivered his address, while the Rev. W. J. Ford read the report of the committee, while Mr. Voss, with his eye fixed on Mr. Griffiths, and his finger pointing to the portrait, was delivering the presentation address, and while speech after speech was delivered by the Revds. D. Howells, John Whitby, Watkin Williams, and others, the feeling was increasing in intensity. We saw how joy was beaming in the countenances of the Gower people, and even streaming from the eyes of not a few of them in gladsome tears, while their beloved pastor was thus honoured. The

only one who appeared in the least unhappy was Mr. Griffiths himself. We have heard some good people who have received testimonials, and who have been obliged to sit and listen to speeches in their own praise, say that it is a terrible ordeal to pass through. Mr. Griffiths probably felt this to be true, and we have evidence in his diary that he expected it to be so, for on the preceding Wednesday he had earnestly prayed for "*grace to pass uninjured through this trial.*" The following is the substance of the address in which he acknowledged the kindness of his friends:—

"You will excuse me when I say on this present occasion that I don't know how or what to speak; yet I must speak, because your kindness has laid me under an obligation to acknowledge your handsome gift, in this expensive portrait which you have now presented to me. The greatest difficulty I find in making a reply is, that I must speak something of myself. That is what I always dislike, because it may appear to savour of vain glory, though I have now the advantage of old age on my side. Yet Elihu says, 'Old men are not always wise;' therefore I must beg you on the present occasion to bear with me a little in my folly. I hope I shall not be guilty of seeking my own glory, but give all to Him to whom it is due. I shall therefore begin by saying, 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory!'

"I shall have been in this peninsula forty-three years, if my life is spared to see this year out, and never felt disposed to leave the place. Though on several occasions in former years I have been asked

and pressed to do so, I could never feel my mind at liberty to accept any other field of labour.

"I live now among the third generation since I first had the honor of commencing my labour here; and I acknowledge, to the praise of Him who has all men's hearts under his control, that I have been favoured with a large share of the goodwill and affection of the people in the various hamlets and localities of the country where I labour. This has not always been the lot of good men; but through mercy it has been mine. Though always more or less in weak health, I have only been one Sabbath out of the pulpit for the last thirty-eight years.

"I have hitherto had the privilege, in connexion with other brethren, of itinerating in portions of twelve parishes, and regularly preaching the gospel in private houses to attentive congregations. And to mark the very different feeling of the people from what it was thirty or forty years ago in this respect, I remember about that time, when I made several offers to preach in certain villages, I could not get a house to hold a meeting. None were willing to open their doors. One told me in one village, 'I don't care to admit you to my house if you will *pay* me for it.' I said, 'No; the gospel we preach must be free; but I shall take care not to put you to any expense on account of the meeting being in your house.' But the negotiation failed. I remember the answer from a person in another place, when I asked if he would give me leave to preach in his house, was this: 'I don't care *for once*; but I would not like to have it continued.' But at present the state of feeling on this subject is so altered (I speak from facts), I know we should have the majority of houses everywhere opened to us, if we were to ask for them. But there is still one subject

which pains and oppresses my soul, and I now speak in the presence of a large number of people who must know the truth of what I say. But few hearts are savingly opened to receive the truth, and the houses consecrated for family prayer are few and far between. This subject has pressed for years and continues to press heavily on on my soul. 'Tis true we have been spared to see some changes for the better in this respect; but not commensurate, in my opinion, to the labours bestowed.

"By the gracious help of God I have preached in Gower during these forty-three years upwards of *twelve thousand sermons*. There is no praise due to me for this, but there is praise due to God who helped and sustained me in his work; and I wish publicly now in the presence of his people, to praise his blessed name for his goodness to me.

"Now, concerning this handsome and expensive testimonial, too expensive for me, I *deeply feel* and *appreciate* the kind Christian feeling which produced it. I accept it thankfully as a token of sincere affection on the part of all who subscribed towards it, wishing and praying that every one of them may profit and be ultimately saved by the blessed gospel. This is alone the sweet bond of true fellowship, of true love, and sanctified affection. I do not expect to labour much longer in sowing the good seed of God's word in this country; but my faith is strong that in God's time religion shall prevail, and become the delight and practice of the people of Gower."



## CHAPTER XV.

Light in the evening—accessions to the church—death of his brother—increasing weakness—the last supper—farewell prayer meeting—the end.

ON Wednesday, the 18th of July, 1816, Mr. Griffiths then a young man, sat down to write a sermon on Zechariah xiv. 6, 7: "And it shall come to pass in that day that the light shall not be clear nor dark; but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day nor night: but it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light." He was not able to get on at all; but returning to the task three days later, thoughts came flowing into his mind in an unusually powerful manner. He felt that the Spirit of God was thus graciously giving him light on his own word. He was overwhelmed with a sense of gratitude, and was obliged to pause in his writing now and then, and weep tears of joy. As he went on that evening towards Llanpumsant, where he was to preach on the following day, he "had some sweet moments in meditating still on the same subject."

At the foot of the entry of which the above is the substance, there is a note written thirty-six years afterwards to the following effect:—"1852. The above sermon was the means of producing greater effects in several places than any that I have preached from the beginning of my ministry."

Probably he had little conception at the time how accurately the text he studied with so much pleasure described his own long day of labour. During his forty-three years residence in Gower, the light was not clear nor dark. It was not night, for to some extent his ministry was successful. Darkness was dispelled, prejudices were overcome, and many were savingly converted. Still it was not day, for the great majority of those who willingly heard the gospel still continued in unbelief. But at evening it was light, and such light as made him willing to say with Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

For many years he had bitterly lamented the comparatively small additions to the number of professing Christians in Gower. The following, written in August, 1859, is one out of many similar entries which we find taking up a great part of his voluminous diary.

"That which gives me daily anxiety is the want of additions to the church—the want of living stones brought to the temple. We have no movement in this direction. This church, in which by the kind providence of God I have laboured so long without interruption, is rather decreasing than increasing in numbers and efficiency. Some go to the grave, and others remove from the neighbourhood, while their

places are not filled up by new converts. This is the subject of my daily prayers and constant anxiety; but the Lord seems to withhold his converting grace. The people hear, and seem at the time to feel; but there it ends." Again—

"September 7th, 1859. My prayer is that the Lord may please to bring into this church some as true members from the younger class of regular hearers, who will take up the work of teaching, prayer meetings, &c., with hearty pleasure and perseverance. Those now in the church are not of that stamp. The old are failing, and those who come next after them are for the most part very lukewarm; indeed, some of them are so irregular in their attendance, that they are more hindrance than help to the cause. I hope that the Lord will yet hear me in this request. I believe my heart is sincere in asking, though my faith is weak, and my fears frequently very strong."

His prayer was answered. A great change did take place. The lukewarm and irregular were roused from their apathy, and a great number, especially from among the "younger classes," were brought to seek the Saviour. It began early in 1860; and from that time we find in Mr. Griffiths' diary no more lamentations over the want of success. February 9th, 1860, we have the following:—

"This evening we held our society at Eben-

ezer Chapel, and were cheered and comforted in receiving two young men who came of their own accord to seek a place in the church of God. May these prove the first-fruits of a large harvest. All the old members present this evening seemed full of gladness, and there was joy beaming in every countenance."

They *were* the "first-fruits of a large harvest," for some months later we have the following:—

"May 31st, 1860. This forenoon we had our church meeting at Bethesda, and received ten new members, all, as far as we can judge, very hopeful characters. This is more than I ever received at one time in Gower before. These, with those whom we received last month, make nineteen in all. *The Lord be praised.*"

The good influence continued to spread, and the church continued to receive new accessions.

In February, 1861, Mr. Griffiths writes: "My heart feels glad and thankful to God that I have been permitted to live to see such a change in the aspect of the cause here. I have often been afraid that it would disappear with the present generation, for we were long intervals without receiving any addition of useful and active members. I felt then generally as much pleasure and power in preaching as I do now, and never thought of changing my field of labour. The Lord, however, would have my faith and patience tried, and now he cheers me in the

evening of my days, just before I quit the field. All is in the best way. \* \* \* I feel truly thankful in the prospect of leaving the place to my successor in a more promising state than I have ever seen it before."

Again he writes: "April 11th, 1861. This field looks better now than on any former period; still it is so far only the day of small things in comparison with what I believe will take place. The promise which says, 'They shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them,' must be accomplished here. I feel indeed thankful for having been employed to prepare the soil for such a beautiful harvest."

But while his spirit was thus revived and cheered, his bodily health was failing fast; and he felt within himself that he was drawing nigh to the grave. On the 4th of July, 1860, his excellent brother, the Rev. Samuel Griffiths of Horeb, was removed to his rest, after a ministerial life of eminent usefulness extending over forty-two years. His health had been failing for some time, but he was able to work to the last, and only missed his pulpit one Sabbath before he was taken to heaven. We have a number of letters from him to his dear brother in Gower, which shew him to be a man of considerable power, as well as of genuine piety. Referring to this painful event, Mr. Griffiths writes—

"July 7th, 1860. I received a letter this

afternoon, announcing the sad tidings of the death of my dear brother. I would have been glad had it been possible for me to go over to his funeral, but the state of my own health will not permit me to undertake the journey. I feel indeed sharp pangs of sorrow after one who in years past has been to me not only a brother, but likewise a father. I did not expect to hear of his death so soon, though I was partly prepared for it by the failing state of his health for some time past. I am expecting the change myself; but he is gone before me, and has no doubt gone to glory." The following Friday Mr. Griffiths received a letter from his son, giving a full account of his brother's funeral. There was an immense concourse of people. All the services were held in the open-air, for no building in the neighbourhood could contain one-half of the assembled multitudes. Portions of this letter he read through his tears, and he was obliged to lay it aside several times to weep. When he had finished the perusal of it he wrote, " \* \* \* \* All this respect and sincere love is grateful to us who are left behind. \* \* \* He has reached the happy state of perfect bliss. I feel a strong desire to be ready, and to follow him into the city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." He had not to wait long. He was able during that summer to continue his Sabbath and week evening labours, but the effort was becoming more and

more painful. He had for some time taken measures to secure an assistant, and had made several unsuccessful attempts in that direction. He was therefore obliged to do more than his strength could bear, in order to keep up the circle of accustomed services. It was a great relief to his mind when, towards the close of September, Mr. Price arrived to render him that assistance which he had so long required. On this subject he writes :

“September 29, 1860. My assistant, Mr. Lewis Price, came here yesterday; and will commence his work to-morrow. This relieves my mind with regard to the future, as my own strength is now failing, and the time of my departure is drawing nigh. The work is increasing, and that cheers my spirit. I hope that this young man has been sent by the Lord to labour in this field, and that he shall have great success.”

In the beginning of October, Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths paid a visit to their son at Aberayron. There they spent about a fortnight. It was a treat they had long desired, to see him for the first time at his own house. Mr. Griffiths was able to preach but little during this journey. He could no longer do as he was wont. After returning home he writes: “My spirits have been refreshed, but my body is still weak and complaining. I feel, indeed, thankful that I have been able to accomplish this visit, which I have

long wished. Lord, now assist me to raise my Ebenezer of gratitude, and renew my resolution to serve thee better the few remaining days appointed for me here in the vineyard below." During the winter months he was able to preach two or three times each Sabbath; but as the spring of 1861 was coming on, his bodily ailments were increasing upon him, and his strength fast ebbing away. On the 22nd of April he writes:

"I have made up my mind this morning to write to Dr. Howell of Swansea. He is the only medical gentleman I have consulted for more than thirty years, and I have only consulted him on one or two occasions. I have always been averse to having recourse to medicines, but in cases of urgent necessity. I can only expect a little present relief from my pain, as I am getting old, and my poor constitution is evidently breaking up. I shall hear from my friend the doctor in the course of two days. In the meantime I wish to improve the health of my soul. That is a matter which more immediately concerns myself, and must be arranged between me and my Great Physician."

The means employed were not effectual. He became evidently worse in the course of that week. But when the Sabbath came, he could not be idle. He had studied a new sermon, and he must preach it. He was unable to go to the



pulpit; but he stood at the vestry door, and there preached the first part of his sermon to a large congregation. In the afternoon he was obliged to lie on his bed; but he was up again in the evening, entered the chapel, and, standing where he had stood in the morning, he delivered the concluding part of his discourse. This was his last; and though he knew it not, the text was well adapted for the occasion: "We are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

His heart was in his work, and he worked until he had no more power to move. On the 23rd of April we find him "studying," and "very ill." On the following Friday he is "in great suffering." On Saturday he is "in bed a great part of the day," yet on the Sabbath he preaches twice, declaring his resolution to push on until he had received the end of his faith—the salvation of his soul.

On Monday, the 6th of May, he felt a little better, and thought he would be benefited by a short ride. He took it, and much enjoyed the fresh air; but unhappily, as on his return he was ascending a slight acclivity, by some means the saddle slipped under him, and he fell heavily to the ground. He was raised to his horse with some difficulty, and rode home. He was never able to go out again. He was happy, however, awaiting the coming of his Lord. All was well.

He "had a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." Still he was sorry to leave his dear people. They were now more dear to him than ever; for many years they had been to him a source of anxiety, now they were his joy and his crown. There were many lambs just added to the Redeemer's flock, and he would so love to remain among them, to care for them and feed them. But let God have his own way; he knew what was best. If he allowed him to remain, it would be to work; and if he removed him, it would be to glory.

During the few weeks he lived after this, he was entirely confined to his bed; he had his diary brought to him several times, and he made three or four entries in it, which cannot be wholly deciphered. As much as we have been able to make out, we will place before our readers. The first was written in Welsh. That language had not been used for this purpose since the year 1816.

"I have passed through greater bodily affliction than I ever remember before. Have been very ill for some months; but for the last month I have been worse. Still I have not been left. . . . . The things of God have appeared to me this last week in a new light, and new preciousness. My mind has been filled with amazement. I wonder that I have not seen before more of the things which meet in the

covenant of grace. If I shall recover a little, and be able to write again, I feel a strong desire to have some new . . . . . Farewell, this book!"

The next entry seems to have been written a few days later in English.

"I cannot at present write in English or in Welsh, yet I can see greater things than usual. I cannot get letters to put words together. Perfect salvation—no failure in any part of it. I have been for the last fortnight in communication with myself . . . . . It is all good, very good, as far as I can see."

The following is the last:—

"I am up again to-day to change for a couple of hours, but not for any real change or enjoyment to me. All things tell me to look beyond. My flesh and bones have indeed changed these last days, but my God has not changed. Though I feel not every day the same, I feel every day the want of more holiness and conformity to God. Whether life continues or death comes soon, all is right in Christ."

With the peace and joy of one who felt that *all was right in Christ*, he lay on his bed of languishing, waiting for the hour of dissolution. Friends and brethren called to see him; he was rejoiced to behold their faces, and they in the heavenly atmosphere of that room lost for the time the fear of death.

On Sabbath day, the 14th of July, his dear

friend, the Rev. D. Howells of Swansea, was supplying at Bethesda. It was communion Sabbath; and the dying servant of the Lord thirsted for one more opportunity to unite with his brethren in commemorating his Saviour's love. Accordingly, after the service in the chapel, a few friends assembled around his bed. In that upper room he partook of his last supper. He was deeply affected himself, and we need not add that so were all present. Taking in his hand the emblems of the Redeemer's body and blood, he said, with intense emotion, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." It was a scene that no one who witnessed it can ever forget; and it was indeed a foretaste of that feast, to the unceasing and full enjoyment of which his soul was speedily to enter.

He had one more Sabbath on earth. On the 21st, while the brethren were assembled at the Sabbath School in the chapel, he sent to request that some of them should come and pray with him. Accordingly, a number entered his room; two or three prayed. One was so overcome with emotion, that he could not proceed. The dying man addressed to them an affectionate farewell, and gave out one of his favourite hymns—

"Come, let us join our cheerful songs  
With angels round the throne," &c.

They dispersed; he was happy. Not long after the breaking up of the little assembly, his

dear wife raised him a little on his bed, to give him a moment's rest; and there, after that happy prayer meeting on that Sabbath afternoon, with his head leaning on the bosom of his dearest earthly friend, without a struggle and without a groan, he fell asleep, and his happy spirit departed to be for ever with the Lord.

Need we say that, on the following Friday, an immense concourse of people gathered together to lay his remains in the tomb? Need we add that there was great lamentation? We could say that, and much more; but the scene which we have described already suggests the idea of an infinitely more glorious procession,—an escort of angels, bearing his happy soul to rest for ever in the bosom of his Redeemer.

